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IN THE GRAY

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John W. Costello

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IN THE GRAY

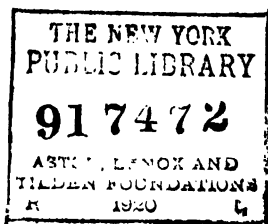
AND OTHER POEMS

BY
JOHN W. COSTELLO

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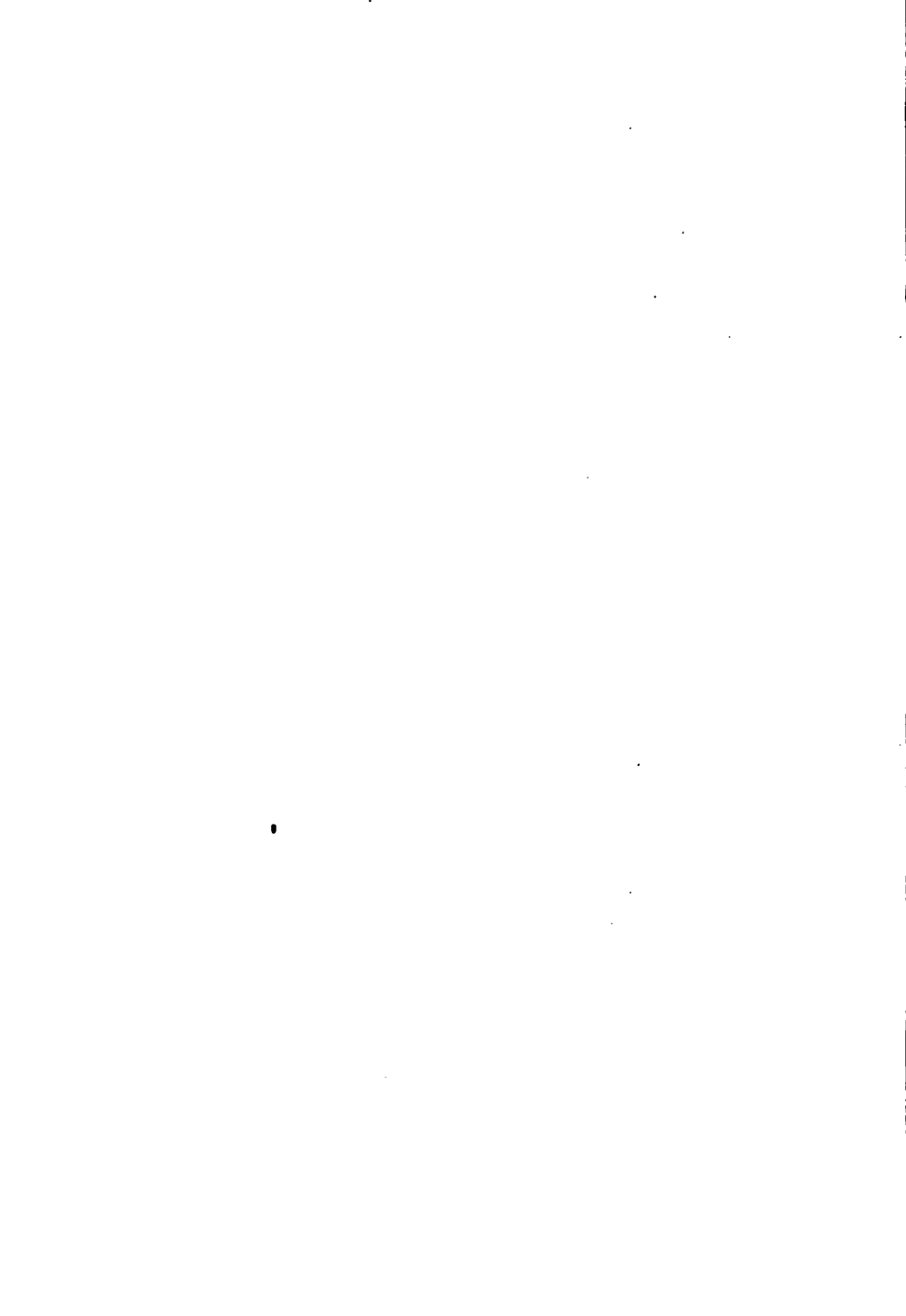
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IN THE GRAY

I

My youth beside the Tennessee,
Was like its rippling wave, as free,
As free to revel, romp and roam,
As any bubble in its foam;
As free to follow wide and far,
To demons as where angels are.
But passing few are e'er defiled
Among the crags of mountains wild;
And fewer still to evil turn
Where parents watchful hearthfires burn.

II

The grassy vales whereon we played,
Were soft as silk on velvet laid,
And stretched beside the winding streams,—
The borderland of happy dreams.

IN THE GRAY

Bordering this the woodland knolls,
In rich luxuriant verdure rolls;
And spreading far o'er hill and vale,
On lofty knoll and hidden dale,
Hides every rent and scar of time,
Except the sawmills' dust and grime.
And higher still the barren peak,
In silent splendor wild and bleak,
Rears upward in gigantic form
Its miser head above the storm.

III

The rude companions of my youth
Were rich in virtue, faith and truth,
And like the totem in the snow,
Revealed their full ancestral show,
In fault and folly, sin and crime,
Of pensive age and youthful prime.
We lived and loved in sinless ease,
A simple life, not hard to please:
Our wants were such as life commands,
With naught of wealth or style's demands;
And all our efforts bent in toil,
Were spent in service in the soil.

IN THE GRAY

IV

My home of logs was rudely built
With every door and wall atilt;
The plumbline here was seldom known
By architect on building stone.
The rents with mud were plastered well;
The floor was scraped with sand and shell;
The roof was thatched with blue-joint grass
From deep ravine or mountain pass;
The chimney seemed as if it grew,
A pile of rocks around a flue,
With mammoth base and walls so thick,
With here and there a sun dried brick.

V

The sun it seemed shone every day,
To lighten toil and brighten play;
And then the angel of the night,
A spendthrift was with mellow light:
So day was bright as day could be,
And night from murky darkness free.
The clouds that rolled above our heads,
Were like the vapor heather sheds,

IN THE GRAY

And brought such gentle soothing rains,
As spread luxuriance o'er the plains.

VI

Our lives were spent in happy glee
And from the torrid temper free,
With all of life to us a joy,
Unmixed with passions base alloy;
And not a fume of jealous hate
E'er passed within our outside gate.
We heard of life and love the best,
And gossip gave eternal rest;
Our playmates all were such as we,
From envy, lust and hatred free,
From selfishness and northern strife,
And creed that taught not love and life.

VII

Along the streams plantations spread
Like those by famed Euphrates fed,
Of richness such as modern eye
Could not in rustic grandeur spy.
In architecture rude but grand,
By neither Goth nor Grecian planned,

IN THE GRAY

With spreading porch on every side,
With doors for strangers open wide,
The mansion in its splendor stood,
Surrounded by the native wood.

VIII

Along the roads and shady lanes,
Beside the brooks and grassy plains,
And even in the belt of wood,
The negroes happy cabins stood.
Their music pealed above the free,
Their laughter filled the day with glee;
Their cares were simple, far and few,
They only craved for what they knew;
And simple too in style and taste,
With needs of life to use and waste.

IX

When to our town one spring there came
A cultured comely northern dame,
Of angel figure and fairy face,
Without a shadow or a trace
Of want or fear, or toil or care,
And just as pure as mountain air,

IN THE GRAY

My life to her was there resigned,
To her was given my dreamy mind,
The moment when my tireless eye
Her graceful form did first espy;
My love for her was keenly set
The time when first our eyes had met;
And never till my dying day,
Shall that first impress fade away.

X

And Mary Preston was her name,
Of Irish parentage she came,
Was born amid the northern wild,
A strong frontiersman's second child.
Her brother's name was Bob, she said,
And like herself was northern bred;
And spirited and strong was he
As any son of toil could be;
And like the wilderness as true
As any flower that in it grew.

XI

This maiden to her uncle came—
His brother's child, she bore his name—

IN THE GRAY

To grasp again the family chain,
Those brothers to unite again,
If not in flesh, with kindred ties
Like those that bind in paradise:
The band of love by nature given
To bind us here to ours in heaven,
And quicken in the flesh and blood
The sacred flame of brotherhood.

XII

Those brothers through their toils and tears,
Had never met for thirty years;
And seldom from each other heard,
Save by some passing stranger's word.
John in his native state remained,
But George ambitious northward strained.
Pushed forward in the savage plains,
In hot pursuit of worldly gains;
And after thirty years of toil,
In timber tract and in the soil,
He sent his Mary South to see
The kin he left in Tennessee.

IN THE GRAY

XIII

So thus she found in narrow range,
Her father's kin with little change;
And simple as the southern life,
Without a feud or note of strife,
With faith as simple, kind and true,
As that the first Apostles knew;
Unchanged by creeds by doctrines wrought,
Nor marred by learning's higher thought;
Unchanged the custom, style and dress
Of boorish prig or fair mistress.
The only innovations known,
Were by the foriegn travelers shown;
And "poor white trash" and colored maids
Who fell for those emblazoned braids,
Were ridiculed for miles around,
As freakish prudes of mind unsound,
As aping in their rustic pride
The whims of those more citified,—
A crime in rural highlands known,
Against tradition's sacred tone.

XIV

At church one eve in rustic pride,
Kind fortune placed me at her side;

IN THE GRAY

Where through the service long I sat,
Observing her from shoes to hat;
Unmindful of the holy word
Which bounded from my ears unheard;
Unmindful of the blessing given
With grace and strength direct from heaven;
Unmindful of the pious prayer,
Beseeching heaven our trials to bear.
The only object I could see
Was she who seated next to me,
Observed in glance and look and song,
With senses verbed and spirit strong,
The blessing, prayer and sacred word,
As if the first she ever heard
Of Him, the Master spirit born,
Like us, to give life's night a morn.

XV

The service o'er, she homeward turned,
And then, ah me! with joy I learned
That she like me should journey till
We passed the woods and old saw mill.
Together on this lonely road,
We walked and talked of things abroad,

IN THE GRAY

Of things quite common here and there,
Of things much talked of everywhere,—
The weather, wind and early frost,
And what the careless planters lost,—
We talked of everything but love,
The only passion from above.
Yet felt we much the sacred flame,
As both our hearts were just the same;
For parting at her uncle's gate,
With the excuse of being late,
The hand she gave I gently pressed,
And felt with joy my own carressed;
Then passed she through the door from sight,
With just a smiling, sweet "Good night."

XVI

Next night obeying my prompting heart,
My errant fancy bade me start
O'er many a rugged, tractless mile,
To her dear uncle's domicile;
Where to my joy she was alone,
With every charm to beauty known,
Upon her radiant form and face,
To give them strength and power and grace.

IN THE GRAY

Awkward was I a rustic boor,
At home among the riant poor;
Before her angel presence shy,
Not knowing what word or phrase to try.
But she was born mankind to please,
And soon my mind had set at ease;
For like a gracious princess free
To rule my thoughts whate'er they be,
She lead me to her northern home,
And opened wide her family tome.
Of Brother Robert most she talked,
As he in paths of angels walked.
For he was mirrored in her eyes
As one who lived in Paradise;
As through his brief career he rose,
Blessed by success and free from woes;
Who in the starlight's frosty glare,
Unarmed subdued a prowling bear;
Or when the wolves the fold beset
With foaming jaws the sheep to get,
How brother Robert club in hand,
Like Sampson on his native strand,
Th'invading host with ease withstood,
And stretched them in their sweltering blood.

IN THE GRAY

XVII

The things of which he was afraid,
Were habits which mankind degrade;
The stimulants of youthful blood,
Which mislead promise from the bud,
And change the heart of peace from grace,
Grave early wrinkles o'er the face,
And shape its victims for despair
To grind and burden down with care.
He loved to hunt the woodland game,
The fawn and surly cub to tame;
The forest's fiercest to subdue
With gentleness and vigor too,
When recreant of wood or field,
To kinder treatment would not yield.
She urged me northward him to meet
Among his pets in his retreat;
And vowed that friendly clasp so dear,
Would e'er be mine at Ligonier,
If I should journey north to see
The proud offspring of Tennessee.

XVIII

A custom much enjoyed by all.
Our weekly meet, from early fall,

IN THE GRAY

Throughout the winter chill and gray,
Till Spring was well advanced in May,
Together brought the youths and maids
From planters' homes and mountain glades,
In merry glee to dance and sing,
With hearts as boyant as the spring.
Our Minstrel, colored, old and blind,
But quick of wit and keen of mind,
The banjo played when one he had;
Or in his gaudy raiment clad,
Hummed with his lips in such a way,
As baffled instrument to play.
Like a zephyr the reeds among,
The longed for tone fell from his tongue;
And like the ricebird on the wing,
He struck such notes as divas sing.
He was beloved by all who heard
His mimicry of woodland bird,
And dearer still to those who knew
The high ideals that in him grew.
Though black his skin his soul was white,
And always found in heaven's sight.

IN THE GRAY

XIX

Among the rustic youths and maids
Of leisure life and various trades,
We met again by rural chance,
And joined together in the dance.
The schottish, waltz, and maiden-steal,
The slow quadrille, Virginia reel,
Were danced by us to minstrel tone,
As light as if our steps were blown
By fairy wings across the floor,
With here and there a touch-no more.

XX

Her partner I throughout the dance,
And laughed we at our queer romance,
And wondered if like stories true,
Our own would end as novels do.
I told her that I only knew
For her my heart strings tighter drew,
And placed me at her feet a slave,
With just a single boon to crave.
"And what is it?" she quickly asked,
"Since your bare soul you have unmasked,

IN THE GRAY

Let me but hear your suppliant prayer,
And all the hopes your fortunes share,
And I, perchance, responsive may
Grant all requests for which you pray."
"Tis yours," I said, "to hold the line,
And draw my heart and soul to thine;
For in my manner thou canst see
That I am spent in pleasing thee."
"Granted," she said, "whate'er thou ask,
To grant such is an easy task."
And laughing at my awkward way,
"Those little things for which you pray,
Like rhododendrons bloom in May,
Are just the same throughout the year,
When all the rest are brown and sere."

XXI

That evening on our homeward road,
I did my burdened heart unload;
And heard tripped from her northern tongue,
In accents sweet as ever rung
From music tone or siren voice,
The words confessing me her choice.
We loitered on our onward way,
Until the mountain peaks were gray

IN THE GRAY

With springtime's clear, ambrosial dawn,
And distant stars were spent and gone;
And talked we much of prospects dear
To both our hearts the coming year.

XXII

The laurel and rhododendrons grew
Beside the lawn the distance through,
That brought us to her uncle's door,
Where parted we so oft before;
We said good night and kissed good-bye,
With tears a few and much of sigh;
For knew we well the coming day,
Would see her on her homeward way;
And from the distance perhaps she
Would seldom think again of me.
'Twas thus I mused, while to my breast,
Her gentle form I lightly pressed,
And on her lips my last farewell
Had left a ransomed soul as well.

XXIII

The days that followed lonely were,
Lonely because I longed for her;

IN THE GRAY

I watched the mails in hopes to see
The message from her home to me;
And like the doomed in barren wild,
Who heard the codes against him piled,
Longed for a joy, a hope to see,
A message that would set him free.
So I a morose lover let
My churlish nature firmly set,
And saw through glasses dim the years
Ahead all stained with blood and tears.
Nor change it could I at my will,
As hope and heaven were wanting still;
And queer it was in gloom to brood,
For one who knew not solitude,
And queerer still to be alone
With friends my infancy had known;
But such was fast within my range,
And I its prisoner could not change.
But why I took such gloomy view,
I could not answer, nor could you;
For from the heavens through distance blind,
Comes influence to mortal mind,
And in the future perhaps we
Shall all her myriad motives see.

IN THE GRAY

XXIV

At length the longed for message came,
That set my heart and soul aflame,
So tender, kind and trusting true,
Profuse as ever lover knew;
And yet reserved as maiden coy
Will never write her deepest joy.
I wrote her daily of my dreams,
So filled with love's effulgent streams,
That like the vineyard in the mould,
A single seed grew hundred fold;
And husbandries successful tales,
Like minnows grew to monster whales.
The origin of master men,
Who rose to fortune, power and fame,
The starting place, where to begin,
That I might emulate each name,
And make a fortune large and great
Around my fanciful estate,
Enmeshed me in ambition's web,
From whence my languid life did ebb.
A wild ambition in me grew,
To strive for what is gained by few:
The world's pleasure, power and fame,
Retainers of the honored name,

IN THE GRAY

Should all be mine when dreams come true,
To share with her my fortunes drew;
Her way to joy and comfort pave,
Her life from struggling hardship save.

XXV

While I my airy castles built,
A monstrous change came o'er the land;
The people rose and stood atilt
With pistol, gun or sword in hand;
And like a flame the scourge of war
Drove through our peaceful homes its car;
And mustered from their peace the men,
To fight, some rule of state to win.
From every home the youths came forth,
To slay their brothers in the north;
And why from such a peaceful life
There rose such hateful, dreadful strife,
I did not know nor know I yet,
Why North and South in combat met,
Except that ranters seeking fame,
Around our people fanned a flame.
The nation seemed to fall in blight,
A rock blown up by dynamite:

IN THE GRAY

Each segment flew apart alone
Whichever way the force had blown.
My native taste, my Tennessee,
Debated long where she should be;
And twixt the nation and the state,
She with her sisters joined their fate;
And swung into the southern cause,
To get the eagle's quills,—or claws.

XXVI

Recruiting now the task became,
For those who skilled in fields of fame,
Proffered their skill the youth to train,
Teach him to love the game of kings,
And rise triumphant o'er the strain,
Where loud the martial clarion rings;
His fellow man with joy to smite,
For facing such as he in fight;
Or stricken like a hero fall
And perish in the angry brawl.
Our God's command "Thou shalt not kill!"
By Glory's slaves unheeded still,
Throughout this wanton world is lost,
Man on the tempest wildly tossed,—

IN THE GRAY

The flotsam of our modern wars,
A sacrifice to heathen Mars.

XXVII

So richly dressed in Southern gray,
I stood as proud as bloom in May;
And was pronounced by old and young,
A knight as grand as e'er was sung
To fame by minstrel's deathless lay,
For spreading slaughter in his day.
Beneath the soothing southern sun,
Our martial training was begun:
We marched upon the village street
Until our burning, blistered feet
Were caloused, scarred and weather worn,
And by our footwear rudely torn.
With guns we mountain lads had skill,
And every shot was sure to kill;
For we were trained from childhood on
In ways that fields of fame are won;
And longed we for a chance to show
Our sires our way to strike a blow.

IN THE GRAY

XXVIII

Nor had we long to wait in vain,
As soon our classic martial strain
Convoyed us to a trysting ground,
Where implements of war were found;
And armed like Dame Fortune's knight,
I sallied forth to join the fight.
The bands where'er I turned mine eye,
Were like the sirens standing by;
Dispensing music and such strains
As lifted souls above their plains,
To higher realms, to glory's call,
Where man forsakes his God to fall
Before some Astorath of chance;
And worship blindly each advance
Of pagan power and heathen rule,
Nor ever dream himself a fool.

XXIX

My heart was with the northern maid,
And e'er for her and hers I prayed;
But worst of all our stormy gale
Shut off from me our northern mail,

IN THE GRAY

And left me lonely in the storm,
Without a word from her to warm
My soul to higher, holier things,
Where fond affection ever clings.
Her silence led me to believe,
That such as she would ne'er deceive;
For such import her message bore,—
The last from her, the one before
The North and South connection broke,
And strove to land a crushing stroke
Upon each other in the fight,
Or nobly perish "For the right."
Throughout the toilsome march I thought
Of her, and when I bravely fought
Amid the shot and bursting shell,
I prayed for her and hers as well
As for myself, that God might save
Us all from war's neglected grave.

XXX

Through dale and swamp our marches led,
And everywhere our heroes bled;
Contesting bravely northern claims
On southern fields beside the James;

IN THE GRAY

Defeated here, victorious there,
We learned our ups and downs to bear.
We learned the strength of freeborn men
On every field we struggled in;
And felt beneath the southern pines,
An empire's pulse along our lines,
Beating like the upbraiding sea,
Against our dire extremity;
But like the hidden ghost of chance,
We bravely checked its fierce advance;
And forced our northern foes to flee
To soil they blessed themselves as free.

XXXI

We saw their mighty captains fail,
And heard their baffled chieftains rail,
When northern son met southern sire,
And fell before his withering fire;
As onward rushing through the flood
Of carnage in fraternal blood,
We pressed through northern soil our way,
And hoped when like a stag at bay,
She'd see her error, sue for peace,
And from our grasp seek her release.

IN THE GRAY

XXXII

A cry there came from out the west,
That our brave brothers sorely pressed,
Were beaten down and forced to yield
On many a well contested field;
And that a western warrior rose,
Like Mountain peak above the snows,
Where all could view him near and far,
The grandest figure of the war.
Our western lines he hammered down,
And captured many a southern town,
And spread dismay where'er 'twas known,
A murmur like his name was blown.
And yet none suffered from his hand,
None ever felt his battle brand;
For large was he of heart and mind,
And strove for every woe to find
A remedy which might allay
Its pangs and urge the scar away.
The northern press in wild acclaim,
Put forth this famous hero's name,—
The only one which all could see,
To match Napoleonic Lee;
And crush the southern spirit out,
By quick defeat and utter rout.

IN THE GRAY

XXXIII

The northern leaders rose and fell
Like rockets or an opera belle;
In all absorbing light they rose,
And spread around diffusing glows;
Then from their lofty zenith turned,
As if by chance they lately learned
That far beneath their talents lay;
And they the victims and the prey
Of wild ambition's reckless flight,
Must fall from some tremendous height;
And down they came in blackened smoke,—
Of war and fame the jeer and joke.

XXXIV

We welcomed in the highest glee,
This northern brave to match our Lee;
And well we knew the northern fan
Could never match us man to man;
But soon we learned like men to feel
His worth against our southern steel.
When through the Wilderness he pressed
In spite of us his northern crest.

IN THE GRAY

We struggled through the vineclad trees,
As orderly as honey bees;
Or through the swamps we rode and fell
Like fireflies in a lowland dell;
Hidden in underbrush awhile,
Emerging thence in single file,
From whole platoons to draw the fire,
Or force some scared brigade retire.
Through tangled shrubs and gnarled vines,
Those great commanders drew their lines;
And in the thicket and the gloom,
Many a hero found his tomb;
For matchless skill was here unknown,
Nor strategy by either shown,
Till in the silence of the night,
Unnoticed from the Union Right,
Its cavalry in circling sweep,
In solid columns long and deep,
Stole to our commissary rude,
And captured our supply of food.

XXXV

Courageously in bitter fight,
It faced us e'en in broad day light;

IN THE GRAY

It wrecked our forts and spiked our guns,
And slay our noblest southern sons,—
The gallant Stuart and his command,—
For naught against it could withstand.
Its leader being no less a man
Than Grant's ideal, Sheridan,
The Julius Caesar of the North,
From war and statecraft issued forth;
Within whose brain was framed the scheme
That strangled our heroic dream.

XXXVI

On many a battle field I served,
And ne'er from simple duty swerved;
I learned the trumpet blast of wars,
And wore upon my breast its scars.
My boon companion sank to rest
In battle heat and o'er his breast,
I crossed his hands, and closed his eyes
After the glaze of death's disguise.
My heart grew caloused at the sights
Which filled my grewsome days and nights;
No tear had I, the founts were dry,
When death and anguish did I spy;

IN THE GRAY

And often when the fight was spent,
The graves we made mid merriment;
And jested which was next to fall
The victim of some cannon ball.
But at Cold Harbor's wild retreat,
A sight I saw from anger's heat,
Which made my blood run cold and chill,
My heart like frightened doe stand still:
Two aged men in deadly grasp,—
So nearly dead that to unclasp
Their dying hold upon each other,
They vainly strove to get another,
So fierce, untamed and wild they fought,
Not like men but as demons ought.

XXXVII

The blue was next the bloody clay,
On top of him our strenuous gray.
They fought within the throes of death,
And each one begged another breath
To enable him his foe to rend,
Before he reached his tragic end.
I pulled them loose and on the clay
Whereon their broken figures lay,

IN THE GRAY

My neighbor Preston I beheld,
With all his wild ambition quelled;
In that delirium sinking low,
To promised land of joy or woe;
Wavering twixt war's smoke and fire,
Where lies our bubble of desire.
His foe who scarce a yard away,
Was struggling to resume the fray,
With angry move of eye and hand,
Strained fiercely o'er the bloody sand;
Surveyed me with an ominous glance
That pierced my spirit like a lance.
When o'er his breast I ran my eyes,
I saw to my supreme surprise,
Bearing his name a little note,
Fastened upon his outer coat;
It read, "George Preston, Ligonier."
There rose into my eyes a tear.
Those brothers to themselves unknown,
Had fought unto death's parting groan.

XXXVIII

I bent above George Preston's form,
And rubbed his hands to make them warm;

IN THE GRAY

I strove to whisper in his ear,
The name I loved, his daughter dear;
I strove to make him understand,
His brother lay beyond his hand.
My words and pleas could not recall
His spirit from its morbid thrall;
No move of fight, he seemed to sink
From life to the eternal brink,
Where every labored breath might yield
His soul upon that crimson field.
I turned to John in my dismay,
But he had gently passed away.
So then for George I strove in vain,
To comfort him and ease his pain,
That he at last might understand
The heart of him who held his hand;
That I might write my sweet heart fair,
His death struggle and latest care,
Concealing of the tragic part,
The features that would break her heart.
But rigid all his limbs became,
And trembling horror shook his frame;
A ghastly stare rose in his eyes,
So passed he off beyond the skies.

IN THE GRAY

XXXIX

I coffined up his broken form,
So fresh from conflict's seething storm,
And sent it to his family home,
Where it might find mid peace a tomb.
A note I pinned upon its breast,—
A wierd note to his home addressed,
Explaining why my southern hand
Prepared this sire for northern land;
Omitting on the note howe'er,
My love for Mary and my prayer,
That she a line to me might write,
Forgetful of the wrong or right
Of the fierce struggle in which we
Forgot to preach fraternity.
I also mentioned all details
To her should go by earliest mails;
And freely felt, no thought amiss,
That surely she'd respond to this.

XL

At dead of night the Union lines.
Drawn up beneath the Blue Ridge Pines,

IN THE GRAY

With sentries set to catch a foe,
If one should chance to hither go;
I through the darkened shadow crossed,
To mail a note at any cost.
I sent the note to Ligonier,
Directed to my Mary dear,
Telling her all I dared to tell
Of how her noble father fell,
And begging if she loved me still,
To write to me at Shattuck's Mill;
Then to my own command returned
Before the morning campfires burned.

XLI

But e'er the longed for letter came,
The Union forces strove to tame
Our haughty hearts and check our pride,
By every means to war allied:
Our forests, towns and hills they swept
With hordes like those that Xerxes kept
Around his friends, his foes to awe,
While making all accept his law.
To Richmond's forts they drove us fast,
And round our lines securely cast

IN THE GRAY

A loop of siege our strength to try,
And force us yield our cause or die.
So as a last resort to save
The cause we served so true and brave,
From wreckage such as now we faced,
Brave Jubal Early's course was traced;
And in his corps my lot I found,
Again to try for northern ground.

XLII

So as the birds in early spring,
Try on the breeze their northern wing,
Our small command o'er hill and dale,
Swept northward like a desert gale,
Planting in northern hearts a fear;
Leaving in southern eyes a tear;
For well our friends knew why we went,
And northern foemen what it meant,
If we should battle past their forts,
And terrify their northern ports.
Around their lines our onward force
Mapped out a broad victorious course;
Defeating on our forward way,
The forces left to guard the day.

IN THE GRAY

The Capital we terrified,
Spread fear through all the country side,
From Washington to Buffalo
Which had no force to strike a blow.
On northern soil we entered far,
Taxed our unwilling hosts for war;
We brought the Union standard down
In many a country place and town;
And mirrored in our shaping eye,
The early prize of victory.

XLIII

But as the eagle on the crags,
Where overweening fancy guides,
The herdsman's lowly cottage nags,
While its circuitous pinions glides
To catch a fowl, a lamb, a child,
Then wing to its aerie wild.
It seldom wins the prize it sought;
But often to destruction brought,
Lives long enough for vain regret,
Before the sun of life has set.
And we more prone to understand,
On easy pinions scourged the land,

IN THE GRAY

Hoping by this to force the fray,
And draw from Richmond Grant's array;
But trouble brooding hatched for us,
In demon style a tangled muss
Of airy schemes all come to naught,
And all with hapless troubles fraught.
For Grant, that wary silent man,
Sent forth his peerless Sheridan,
Who all our Shenandoah razed,
And all our hogs and cattle braised,
His slow fed cavalry to feed,
And strip us of our greatest need.

XLIV

I never shall forget the day,
We strove to check the onward way,
Of that ambitious army corps,
Which seemed to prosper in the roar
Of deafening cannon and to thrive
Where battles' fiercest chariots drive.
With Sheridan in chief command
Of this superb, equipped array,
It strove to check the conquest planned
By Early and to hold at bay,

IN THE GRAY

In Richmond's forts, our gallant Lee,
And make him bend the southern knee.
'Twas on the Shenandoah's side,
We struck to check the northern stride,
And force with strength of men and fire,
The Union Army to retire.
The air was filled with dreamy smoke,
When through our famished lines it broke,
And bore us forward o'er the plain
Like wreckage on the surging main.
Yet we escaped through smoke and rain,
To meet our valient foe again:
On southern soil again to meet,
And drain the dregs of fresh defeat;
As famished we, our land laid waste,
With naught of food supply a taste.

XLV

But not a thought of war had I,
Save rather win than have to fly!
On lovelier scenes my inward eye
Did many a cherished fancy spy.
It mirrored Mary Preston true
To me and to the Union Blue,

IN THE GRAY

Although for years I had not heard
From her a message, scroll or word;
I yet believed in her as when
I was her choice of southern men,
To be her lover, hero, all
That maiden heart might choose to call.
But Fisher's Hill changed plans about,
And Winchester became a rout;
Our scattered army strove in vain,
To reunite our corps again;
But Sheridan was at his best,
And never would from battle rest;
Until our forces o'er the land,
Obeyed the beck of his command.
Far eastward from the fighting ground,
Like flying hare before the hound,
I rested after days of strife,
With just enough of hope and life,
To think of Mary Preston's name
And wonder if a message came,
To buoy my spirit, strength and will,
From her to me at Shattuck's Mill.

IN THE GRAY

XLI

So o'er the hills my way I beat,
Awed not by hardship, toil or heat,
Cheered on by happy birds and flowers
Which had their native joyful bowers
In grass and thicket, shrub and dell,
With love and peace their symphony;
Their songsters sang in every cell,
That woodland overspread for me,
To hide me from the light of day,—
From northern eyes my southern gray;
And aid me in my enterprise,
Which had its source beyond the skies;
For Love to them is God's command,
And they obey its precept grand.

XLVII

At Shattuck's Mill I found no word,
No message from my Mary heard;
So more depressed than e'er before,
I sought to join my army corps;
But found where'er I turned my eye,
Destruction's specter standing by;

IN THE GRAY

For smoke and ashes filled the air;
And midnight with the burning glare
Of homes and towns as bright as day,
Lit up my trackless homeward way.

XLVIII

Crossing a ridge I thought secure,
As every dell and knoll were hid,
My only fear was to endure
The food I found the Shrubs amid:
The brier peeled was savory,
The young acorn delightful food
To one whose feats of bravery
Surpassed his mates in hardihood;
So I of such a trip was proud;
Success or death was what I vowed.
But on the summit of the hill,
A challenge made my heart stand still;
And right before me stood a man
From the command of Sheridan,
Who levelled at my breast his gun,
And swore he'd shoot me if I'd run.
I clearly saw through the moonlight,
His face was firm and filled with fight.

IN THE GRAY

So like a flash my fancy flew,
And in its mirror pictures drew
Of me so many miles away
From Early's shattered Southern Gray.
I knew I never could explain
To loyal friends my cause again,
So quick as thought my pistol drew,
And through his breast its contents flew.

XLIX

He griping fiercely forward fell,
Clutching the grass of southern dell;
His conqueror I bent o'er his frame,
Saw on his dying breast his name,
"Robert Preston, of Lingonier."
And I his murderer standing near!
My senses swam. Could this be true,
That I my Mary's brother slew?
I strove to cheer his dying hour,
By every method in my power;
But naught to consciousness could bring
The mind already on the wing
To Stygian waters far away.
From scenes of earth and human fray,

IN THE GRAY

His soul had passed; I closed his eyes,
And watched the gray mist 'round me rise;
Not caring what was held for me,
By fortune, war or gallows tree.
For all that life held dear was lost;
And longer life should pay the cost;
For Mary Preston ne'er would wed
The man that struck her brother dead.
So all impulsive as a boy,
Thought here my life I should destroy;
But as I mused, in thunders fell
The summons of a sentinel,
Attracted to the desperate spot,
By my pathetic, fatal shot.

L

I surrendered, nor little cared
If foul or fair my fortunes fared;
And to the night guard's solemn tent,
My captive steps were thither bent;
My captor passed, no sign or word
That eye had seen or ear had heard,
Escaped him as he faced the night,
And brought me to the night guard's light;

IN THE GRAY

But like a seneschal of old,
With mien as stern and face as cold,
Delivered me as captive found
Trespassing on forbidden ground.
So in a prison tent I lay,
Bewildered in my dire dismay;
And pondered like a soul condemned,
Before the Stygian wave was stemmed;
And wondered how the fates designed
Preston brothers such end should find;
And I should strike in deadly blare,
The only life I longed to spare.
Before me sat the midnight guard,
A rhyming like a bedlam bard,
Singing his own distich of song,
Holding the accents loud and long;
And straining the climax at the close,
In dulcet triumph through his nose.
Yet kind he was and genial too,
And light of heart and brave and true,
As any youth in Union Blue.

LI

I wondered what the dawn would bring
Against my lawless wandering:

IN THE GRAY

As war prisoner, I'd better fare,
It was my hope, nor did I care,
Except for those I'd leave behind,
What charge against me they might find.
I could not sleep, and musing still,
I met the morning damp and chill,
My guard with me his blanket shared,
Nor food nor drink nor humor spared,
And like the prima donna thrush,
That dignifies each shrub and bush,
Whereon she perches, with her throat,
Dropping in love the jealous note.
So he made me his special care,
To share his all, save hope and prayer,
For him my open heart in turn,
Did every boyish fancy burn,
Revealed its past, its joys and woes,
How love in early triumph rose,
Till grim despair, death or disgrace
Was now what stared me in the face.

LII

He told me when he'd gain release,
Through battles won or early peace,

IN THE GRAY

The world's most charming maid he'd wed,
Nor think again of martial tread,
That peace to him would mean so much,
A friend's dispute he would not touch;
But live and love as Christian should
And serve mankind by doing good.

LIII

My open heart I then revealed,
And not a word or thought concealed.
I told how Mary Preston came
Into my life a living flame,
Burned every boyish love away,
Gave me a more ambitious day;
That since the war's outbreak no word
From my dear Mary had I heard.
Of my letter from Shattuck's Mill,
My hope that she might answer still,
The change of war, my long delay,
Defeat, disaster and dismay,
I told as friend might talk to friend,
Without reward or hope to bend
This soldier's will to serve my end;
I told my woes from Fishers Hill,
O'er hill and dale to Shattuck's Mill;

IN THE GRAY

Of how I strove a word to hear
From my beloved Mary dear;
Of how augmented was my care,
When I received no message there.

LIV

I then told how the sentinel,
Her dear beloved brother fell;
And through my tears in deep despair,
I told him of my wish and prayer,
E'en though it were an easy task,
That clemency I would not ask;
That death to me was dearer far
Than scenes of hatred, lust and war;
That all I lived for now was lost,
And all I hoped for tempest tossed.
So from the wreckage of the night,
My life was foundered, sunk from sight,
A blackened hulk beneath the wave,
Disgraced in death and in the grave.

LV

His glistening tears he brushed away,
And peered around to see if day

IN THE GRAY

Was dawning in the eastern sky,
Or shivering sentry standing by.
"The way to Richmond lies ahead,
No sentry guards the river bed;
And I must leave you for an hour
In this sequestered lonely bower,
Trusting of course to find you when
I to this place return again."
Then pausing at the door, he said,
"The price of blood is on your head,
At dawn three guards for you shall be
So closely set you cannot flee;
And ere the sun to-night goes down
Behind yon spires of neighbor town,
The world will know your crime. your doom;
Yon stagnant marsh shall be your tomb."

LVI

He took a pail and passed from sight
Into the darkness of the night.
I took the hint yet dared not flee
And doom a soul as brave as he;
I pondered in my loneliness,
My life, my love, my keen distress;

IN THE GRAY

Yet scarce divined a higher law,
Administered without a flaw,
My mind to earth was firmly set;
My hope my Mary strove to get,
Though in my heart I firmly knew,
That I with life and earth was through.
Oft heavenward I turned my mind,
But could not keep it there resigned;
For Mary Preston's image fair
Was all I saw when wrapt in prayer;
And all that heaven meant for me,
Was Mary for eternity;
And loss of her I knew full well,
Would grieve me worse than fire of Hell.

LVII

An hour or more had passed away,
Ere mountain peaks announced the day
By lustrous specters on each one,
The lowering light from rising sun.
And ere the darkness left the vale,
My guard returned with empty pail,
And seemed astonished me to find
Where he had left me so resigned.

IN THE GRAY

"If your Mary you value dear,
I should not now have found you here;
Your name to us is still unknown,
Your secret lives with you alone;
Your Mary dear should never know
The hand that laid her brother low;
I strove to save your lawless head
For better days," he calmly said.
Somewhat unmoved, I made reply,
"My lone desire now is to die,
Nor would I for my ransom give
The paltry begger doomed to live;
As every hope whereon my eye
Had sought repose in days gone by,
From me forever disappeared,
And left my conscience galled and seared,
Beyond the healing art of balm,—
Too seared to wear its erstwhile calm,
When Robert Preston by my hand,
Was felled upon the bloody sand."

LVIII

So with the rising of the sun,
Three guards arrived instead of one;

IN THE GRAY

I saw through this the meaning far,
A prisoner I but not of war.
Some graver sharge against me set,—
A cobweb like a tangled net,
To me enmesh and hold me fast,
While robes of crime were o'er me cast.
I was undressed from foot to head;
My clothes were searched, my letters read.
An ancient letter brown with age,
My Mary's best and latest page,
I begged them leave me, that alone
Would every slight of theirs atone.
They heeded not my vain request,
But wrapt the letter with the rest,
To be against me used that day,
When my faithful southern gray
Should wrap a felon such as I
Accused of being a southern spy.

LVIX

I heard the charge and knew full well,
No friend of mine the truth could tell;
As none my secret heard or knew,
And strong the case against me grew;

IN THE GRAY

So guarded, waiting in suspense,
I calmly mused on my defense.
But like my prayer my Mary rose
Above my crowding list of woes;
And in my vision lived and reigned,
The queen who all my homage gained.

LX

Nor had I long to meditate
On ills of life or strokes of fate,
For ere the sun was half way high
Upon the cloudless eastern sky,
I was requested to appear
Before the martial court and clear
From every crime and charge my name,
Or suffer obloquy and shame.
My guards arrayed me in my gray,
And with me straightway marched away,
To where the martial court was met
To hear my cause and judgement set;
If evidence should favor me,
To set me in their judgment free;
And if no voice sustained my lot,
My fate consigned me to be shot.

IN THE GRAY

LXI

The court convened; the advocate,
The crimes against me did relate,
In tones vociferous and loud,
As if to win the yaupish crowd,
Attracted by the morning cry
Against the captive southern spy.
In thunder tones he wrapped my name
Round every crime and curse and shame,
Practiced only where angels fell,
By such as I, a Fiend from Hell.
Then staring through his tear dimmed eyes,
He wept o'er souls in Paradise;
Called them hither to testify
If he could in his statements lie;
Called Robert Preston from the Styx
His judgement seal on me to fix;
Then asked the court to sentence me
To rifle squad or gallows tree.

LXII

I then was asked my cause to state,
My northern mission to relate,

IN THE GRAY

And all my wanderings to explain,
Since my command could not regain
Its shattered columns in the flight
From Winchester's disastrous fight.
But since the advocate's tirade,
Against my charcater was made,
I felt the truth the name would sear
Of my beloved Mary dear;
Or make my tale an artful lie,
If she my story should deny;
So I resolved my doom to face
And keep her free from my disgrace.

LXIII

As one who knows himself condemned,
Without a purse or loyal friend,
Of every fact to save him trimmed,
I bravely faced my tragic end.
I calmly rose to state my case,
Looked my accuser in the face,
Though inward quaking, boldly said,
"Since the adviser of this court
Condemns me and demands my head,
Before a word of bad import,

IN THE GRAY

By worthy witness testified,
Is lodged against my lonely side;
I justly fear the truth might be
Driven to scorn by such as he.
With scarce another day to life,
A lie I dare not, shall not give.
Pronounce my doom the worst you can,
And I shall meet it like a man!"

LXIV

The advocate rose up again,
Somewhat amazed, with hand on chin,
And said more calmly than before,
"The crimes against you shall be more
Than I expressed, and well sustained
By witnesses herein retained,
Your misdemeanors to relate
And fix on you your tardy fate."

LXV

The testimony then was heard;
Against me rang each cutting word;
Accused I was of every act,
Alone committed, or in pact

IN THE GRAY

With outlaws from the roaming wild,
'Gainst man or woman, home or child;
They proved against me in their ire,
The work of wind and rain and fire;
And strove on me the cause to place
For each disaster and disgrace,
Besmirching them to outward eyes,
From lawless pranks and revelries.

LXVI

When they concluded, I arose,
Refused my conscience to disclose,
And with my summed up courage high,
Denounced their tales as perjury;
But still refused 'gainst such as they,
A word in my defence to say.
"A court permitting tales," I said,
"As gross as those against my head,
By my accusers launched anew,
Munchausen would believe as true,
I must regret to leave this strife,
Which is my latest act of life,
Without a trial fair and free
To measure my extremity;

IN THE GRAY

To scan my steps and judgement set
Against the act which I regret;
And which perhaps might justify
That guilt upon my head should lie.
But in this court such calloused men
Are met to judge another's sin,
I must deny myself and you,
To offer up my story true."

LXVII

Their verdict came without surprise,
That I be shot before sunrise,
At daybreak on the following day,
And buried in my southern gray;
And half the time to me they gave,
To make my coffin, dig my grave,
And letters to my friends to write
Of my despair and hopeless plight.
The other half by them consigned,
Should make me to my fate resigned,
Forgetful of each curse and care,
Devote my latest hour to prayer.
A chaplain if desired should be
With their instructions sent to me

IN THE GRAY

To help me in my trying hour,
Resign the world and all its power;
Whose service should be freely given,
To lead my soul from earth to heaven.

LXVIII

The advocate pronounced my doom,
Consigned me to the silent room;
But ere his last word uttered fell,
A man arose my tale to tell:
The guard who strove to set me free,
Espoused my cause and faithfully
My tale to them did there relate,
And begged them change my doom or wait
For an appeal to Washington,
Which by him straightway was begun.

LXVIX

The court rebuked him for his part,
But could not change his honest heart;
Nor by its orders stop his tongue
Which through the crowded court room rung:
He charged the court my tale to hear
And baseless crimes against me clear;

IN THE GRAY

Their futile charges off me take,
Delete their briefs for justice sake.
He then related word for word
The simple honest tale he heard
From my own lips the night before,
While he and I recounted o'er
Our disappointments and desires,
In happy days when love admires.
He told how conscience racked my brain,
Since I had Robert Preston slain,
That I had hoped ere long to die
And end my hours of misery;
That in this cause I had no fear,
And death to me was doubly dear;
That of the judgements they might give,
The worst was dooming me to live.
He begged them take my case in hand,
With agents such as they command,
And search through every path they knew,
And prove my story false or true.
They ridiculed his brave appeal,
And on their verdict set their seal;
And I condemned was led away
To where my new born troubles lay,—
The sturdy highland coffin pine,
The grave ridge rising in a line.

IN THE GRAY

LXX

Much guarded at this grewsome task,
I labored well nor deigned unmask
My cautious spirit to their view,
Lest they should deem my heart untrue.
I dug my grave, my coffin made,
While silently the while I prayed,
Nor offered to my guards a thought
Of higher life through sorrow brought,
That might lead us to understand,
And take each other by the hand.

LXXI

But turning at my task my eye,
My reckless, lounging guards did spy:
Naught should I fear from their attacks,
As toward my labor were their backs;
So far away their guns were stacked,
They could not reach them if attacked.
"The way to Richmond lies ahead,
No sentry guards the river's bed!"
Instantaneous as a flash,
Did through my thought creations crash,—

IN THE GRAY

But that was all I did not fly,
A man I lived, a man would die.
I knew the guards meant I should be
Far on my homeward way and free:
For oft my work they'd ridicule,
Condemned and doomed me as a fool,
When in the distance far away,
No guarded coffin for me lay.
Their jests and jeers I understood,—
I knew they meant for me but good,
And still I toiled, my duty done,
Was my reward at set of sun.

LXXII

Just at sunset the death guard came,
With smile as kind and manner tame
As was my guard of night before,
And led me through the prison door,
Where earth's last day should dawn for me,
Mid terrors of eternity.
No sense of mine could guard my mind;
My thoughts like echoes unconfined,
At random flew from child to man,
And mirrored every hope and plan

IN THE GRAY

That marked my boyhood youth and prime,
From dreams of love to battle grime.
Again my Mary Preston rose
Im memory above my woes,
And gave me in my dreams so brief,
My only glitter of relief,—
A star illuminating night,
And making all around it bright.
And more than that the daily press,
On my romance laid rigid stress;
Through north and south my guard's vain plea
In my defense spread far for me;
And gave me e'en in northern eye,
A gleam of kindled sympathy.

LXXIII

The chaplain with the darkness came,
My scattered senses to reclaim;
And lead me from the scenes of war,
Where seraphs and where angels are.
His kindly manner, gentle ways,
Soon raised my soul from battles' blaze,
To holier thoughts and higher things
Than man's despair and envy's flings.

IN THE GRAY

With him in solemn prayer I knelt,
Until my mind more peaceful felt;
He then to me his heart revealed
In visions from the battle field:
The awful carnage wrought by man,
To force upon his kind some plan
Or selfish scheme of little worth,
Or take from him his share of earth.
Then turning to my case he said,
"Your guard at risk of fame and head,
Your case to every power has brought,
That could relieve the judgment sought;
Though much chagrined, at loss perplexed,
To Sheridan he's going next,
With what result we soon shall know,
As Sheridan can mercy show;
He is as brave in heart as mind,
And cowards only are unkind."

LXXIV

A lover's tale however told,
Commands among the brave and bold,
A vision like a gleam of light
Upon a murkey road at night;

IN THE GRAY

And leads them in their sympathy,
To serve his cause whate'er it be.

LXXV

Ere midnight came the loyal guard
Arrived to tell of his reward,
That Sheridan my tale had heard,
Had listened to it every word,
While servants of the state and press
Let business wait for his address;
Then sending forth a mandate bold,
Ordered the program to withhold,
Of executing me before
A verdict fair was passed and o'er;
Then issued forth beneath his seal
To Washington his brave appeal;
And then to him he laughing said,
"Fear nothing for that youngster's head!
For what you seek you're sure to gain,
As none to Lincoln plead in vain;
He's pardoned every class of crime.
To doom a lover in his prime,
For such a deed as you relate,
Would break his heart and crush his fate.

IN THE GRAY

To morrow morning early he
Some weighty questions has with me;
So the brave lover must appear
And tell his tale to him right here."

LXXVI

It cheered me much such faith to find
Among my fellows for mankind;
And more than all for me distressed,
A worthy youth my story pressed;
A pleasure too was mine to know
Such service was from worthy foe.
My hope to better fate resigned,
Rose slowly o'er my reason blind:
At first a dreamlike, dawning bliss,
So far its rays appeared amiss,
Among the terrors crowding fast
Upon the day designed my last;
But larger grew and brighter far,
Each ended in a separate star,
So bright and lustrous in its zone,
That all was light and clearly shone;
That victory would set me free,
If mercy could through justice see.

IN THE GRAY

LXXVII

The chaplain prayed for my success,
And parting gave me a caress
As gentle as a lover kind,
On sweet-heart's lips could ever find;
He told me rise above the clod
And put my prayerful trust in God,
As he who seeth through the mind,
Could change the hearts of human kind,
And to me peaceful solace bring,
And from my soul depression fling,
As quickly as a ray of light
Makes all the darkness round it bright.

LXXVIII

The dawn designed to be my last,
Rose through the darkness fair and fast;
And with it rose my spirits clear,
Above distraction, doubt and fear;
And bravely with the rising sun,
My cholers vanished, every one,—
Except that Robert Preston's name
Blackened my whole career with shame;

IN THE GRAY

And left my heart amid distress,
The empty sheath of nothingness:
For every eye that gazed on me,
I felt my blackened soul could see;
And every lip that moved in thought,
My secret and my sentence sought.
But rapturous eyes that o'er me rove,
Could only see despairing love;
And anxious lips moved to impart
The secrets of a lover's heart.

LXXIX

To Sheridan my anxious feet
Careered along the weary street,
In haste my doubtful fate to try,
A game of chance with destiny.
The great commander's fame I feared;
My courage sank when him I neared;
And confidence forsook my veins
When doom of death or prison chains,
Before me in a vision rose,
To clog the channels of repose.
For Robert Preston's death to me,
Doomed me to the gallows tree,

IN THE GRAY

Not to the rifle squads desire,
To murder me with coward fire.

LXXX

The great of mind are great of heart,
Resolved to do for God their part,
And do it well, whate'er it be,
Despite opinions offered free,
And held aloft by man or press,
As what should be, mankind to bless.
He greeted me with cordial clasp,
With kind caresses in his grasp,
And smiling told me live in cheer
As hope for me was dawning clear.

LXXXI

An adjutant who standing by,
Observed my entrance with a sigh;
Offered without request a word,—
A comrade's tale he overheard,—
That Mary Preston would appear,
To deck her murdered brother's bier;
And mark his grave till better days,

IN THE GRAY .

On North and South should brightly blaze;
Then his remains when discords cease,
In Ligonier should rest in peace,
Away from conflict's jealous din,
Among the ashes of his kin:
That she my tale could verify,
Or all the fabric brand a lie;
And from the fetid atmosphere
Such sentiments and notions clear.

LXXXII

The name of Mary Preston turned
To flames the blaze that slowly burned;
And fanned the slow consuming fire
That scorched my heart with bright desire.
My strength forsook me at her name,
And palzied trembling shook my frame;
Into the nearest seat I sank,
With breath as fast and eyes as blank,
As one o'ercome by shock or blow,
From current fierce or savage throw.
My scattered wits refused to act;
My dext'rous tongue forgot its tact;
And perspiration damp and cold,
Enveloped me with dripping hold.

IN THE GRAY

For Mary Preston to deny
And brand my roving tale a lie,
Would crush me like the fiercest doom,
Within the shadow of the tomb.
And yet from her dead brother's breast,
Where fond her last caress was pressed,
Could she the blood red hand defend,
That brought him to his tragic end?
The bloody years that passed between,
Since her sweet form I last had seen,
Might all her love for me have stilled,
Her heart with northern lovers filled.
I could not face her as I stood,
The man who shed her brother's blood;
I feared her more than death and hell,
And yet I loved her just as well.
So in my anguish many a tear
Was sacrificed for love and fear;
But hope was gone and deep despair
Seemed round me groping everywhere.
So with the crowding rise of thought,
I meekly asked that I be shot.

IN THE GRAY

LXXXIII

But outside cheering ringing loud,
Indulged by all the soldiers proud,
Proclaimed some worthy chief of state,
Arrived upon some mission great.
'Twas Lincoln, smiling, tall, serene,
Shambling in gait, awkward in mien,
Straight to Sheridan's tent he came,
With clasp of hand and call of name,
And merited but kindly praise
For checking Early's lupine ways.
"A prisoner this? " at me he said,
As gently on my anxious head,
His kindly hand he gently pressed;
Then passed along with smile and jest,
To join the waiting warrior throng.
In settling issues weak and strong.

LXXXIV

My eyes rose quick to Sheridan,
Who promptly to his chief began,
"This Southern boy by sentries caught,
Was doomed this morning to be shot;

IN THE GRAY

Convicted by the martial court,
Of being a spy within our fort;
And to his guard a tale he told,
Of such devotion as of old,
Would such defenders to him bring
As counselled with the court and king.
So to your clemency I must,
This lover's last appeal entrust."

LXXXV

Taking the papers to him passed,
My final word, perhaps my last,
He glanced them o'er then sternly said,
"Such sentiments by lovers fed,
Destroy our discipline and press
Upon our ranks its keen distress,
When courts are rudely thrust aside,
To save some wretched felon's pride."
My courage sank till in his eye
A flashing twinkle I did spy,
But why he should be so severe,
To me was neither dense nor clear;
Nor could I readily divine
From his cold visage glance or sign,

IN THE GRAY

That sympathy might indicate,
Or fellow feeling in my fate.
Then turning in a kindly way,
He gazed upon my southern gray,
And earnestly requested me
To tell my tale whate'er it be.

LXXXVI

So like a soldier proud I rose;
My northern mission to disclose;
And every fact therein to state,
Some cherished fancies to relate;
For now I felt since truth was out,
To leave no further room for doubt:
To tell it all whate'er it be,
Nor ask my peers for clemency;
But face conditions like a man
Who nothing feared. I thus began:
"Since to your northern soil I came,
(The South's by right and yours by claim)
The keenest reverence I felt
For rugged hills and woodland belt,
Which from your tents stretch proud and free
Like those I loved in Tennessee.

IN THE GRAY

LXXXVII

"For to my sacred thoughts they cling,
And to my mind fond memories bring,
Of one across the stormy years,
That drenched our soil with blood and tears;
Who like the fairy in disguise,
Or angel straight from paradise,
Entered my life my hopes to share,
And stripped it from the bleak and bare,
Gave me ambition great and high,
For southern wealth and fame to try.
Our troth was plighted ere the day,
This angel beauty went away
To Ligonier to serve and toil,
In kitchen, barnyard—and soil.

LXXXVIII

"Her letters to me came at first,
Till South Carolina's bubble burst,
And plunged us in this dreadful war,
To win a crown or wear its scar.
So with the stoppage of the mail,
Our intercourse was doomed to fail.

IN THE GRAY

Since then no line from her I heard,
No message, nor from friend a word,
Through every avenue I sought,
With Union prisoners, soldiers brought
Within our ranks; and tried in vain
By mail to hear from her again.

LXXXIX

"I closed her dying father's eyes
At Cold Harbor, and in disguise,
Among my friends, his body sent
To Ligonier for interment.
Of this event to her I wrote,
The letter mailed from Shattuck's Mill,
And hoped at least an answering note,
Since Union troops paroled it still.
But Early's Raid and Sheridan
Upset my well directed plan,
And kept me in the valley fight,
Till scattered were we all in flight.

XC

"Over this western ridge I fled
As rifle balls whizzed past my head,

IN THE GRAY

Pursued by Union Cavalry,
Until there came the thought to me,
That Shattuck's Mill a day ahead,
Some hope upon my love might shed.
So to the Mill I hastened on,
And found from her no message, none!

XCI

"Then East and South I turned my way,
To join again my comrades gray;
And keep away from scouring trains,
That swept like vultures o'er the plains.
By day in cave or ditch I slept,
By night through tangled glades I crept;
Till on this lonely northern mere,
I met the fate that brought me here.
That northern sentry me did get
Has caused me nothing of regret.
But on yon ridge's barren head,
I shot brave Robert Preston dead;
My Mary's brother! such a crime
Condemns me through all future time;
And for his murder I should die,
But do not shoot me as a spy!

IN THE GRAY

XCII

"My life is wrecked and my despair
Finds not among mankind a share,
As my ideals now are gone,
And I must live this life alone.
I cannot Mary Preston meet,
This side of Heaven's Judgement seat;
She cannot think me as of yore,
Since by my hand her brother's gore,
Upon yon sunbrowed hill was shed.
'Twas I who struck her brother dead!

XCIII

"A lonely life from her apart,
Bereft of passions of the heart,
As empty as a vacant room,
And haunted by the shape of doom,
Which o'er me hangs where'er I go,
Reminding of impending woe,
Is my sad lot if you should give
A verdict dooming me to live.
It is not death but life I fear,
A life without my Mary dear.

IN THE GRAY

So for my crimes my life should be
Forfeited on the gallows tree."

XCIV

The rugged lines in Lincoln's face
Wore disappointment's puzzling trace;
I clearly saw my truthful plea
Was not to him what it should be.
So like a toiler craving rest,
I felt whate'er was done was best;
And trusting in a quick reply,
Condemning me to live or die,
I little cared which one he said,
As each was as the other—dead.
I sought upon his tragic face,
Some sentiment or hope to trace,
While o'er his eyes he held his hand,
As if my sentence to command
From conscious thought so long impressed,
It did not mingle with the rest.
Though harsh, I feared, his judgment dealt,
Some sympathy for me he felt,
As o'er his furrowed face there crossed
Some kindly gleams by pity tossed;

IN THE GRAY

Then full on me he turned his gaze,
From head to foot in divers ways,
My manner, dress and face to scan,
Then turned his eyes to Sheridan.
"This lover is a noble youth,
And sure I am he told the truth."
So then to me he calmly said,
"The judge's power in me I dread,
Fearing the guilty might escape
If charity my judgment shape;
Fearing to doom the innocent,
If moved by code or precedent.
This case is *sui generis* too!
Let Mary Preston sentence you."

XCV

Beside me loose a curtain hung,
Of weathered canvas loosely flung
Across the tent's most slanting side,
Some secret of the camp to hide.
So at his words an aide arose
And drew the curtain to disclose
To my full view the fairest scene,
My longing eyes had ever seen,—

IN THE GRAY

My Mary Preston from the bier
Of her beloved brother dear;
Brought forth by guards to testify,
My tale to vouch for or deny.
Me thought she never looked so fair,
As rising slowly from her chair,
She glanced at me, at Lincoln next;
What wonder that she seemed perplexed!
She forward stepped, her swimming eyes,
Bedewed by clinging memories;
And like a queen with gentle stride,
She soon was standing by my side.
Through tears a smile swept o'er her face,
Then disappeared and left no trace
In the short glance she cast on me,
Of friendliness or sympathy.

XCVI

My reeling senses swam around,
In phantasy as in a swoond,
Were tumbling, tossing like a stream,
And all to me shaped as a dream.
"Now Mary," quoth the President,
"You heard the tale of this young man;
That justice might be his we sent

IN THE GRAY

For you to justify or ban
His well directed narrative.
"Tis yours, young maid, his life to give,
And bid him in your mercy live;
Failing in this, the court's decree,—
That he must executed be.—
Shall be enforced ere set of sun,
(Ere now the gallows is begun;)
So now to you I him resign,
To punish him by jail or fine;
Or send him to the gallows tree,—
His fate is yours whate'er it be."

XCVII

Her eyes were flooded o'er with tears,
Her hands were trembling from her fears;
She clenched them close upon her breast,
And to the chief her words adressed:
"For years I've known and loved this youth,
And sure to you he told the truth;
I know full well he'd rather die,
Than gain his freedom by a lie.
He served my loving father's end,
His body home to me did send.

IN THE GRAY

Two letters I from Shattuck's Mill,
From him received, and wonder still
Why those I wrote to him were lost,
When Union armies held the post.
Each month to Shattuck's Mill I wrote
My broken heart's despairing note,
And wondered why no answer came,
Unless his fate had been the same
As those who in some battle fell,
With none their tragic end to tell;
And in the trenches moulder low,
Forgotten till doom's trumpet blow.
I feared him lost, for him I wept,
And deeply in my memory kept
His image sacred and alone,
To time's restoring balm unknown.

XCVIII

"My brother Robert loved him well,
From tales to him that I did tell.
If those two youths could interchange
Their confidence at closer range,
Without a thought of war's wierd way,
Neither would the other slay.

IN THE GRAY

Such accidents belong to war,
Nor should they leave on peace their scar.
My brother's challenge in this strife
Meant his or else his foeman's life.
So I regret my brother dear,
But love for me that placed him here,
My heart for him rules o'er my will,
I loved him once, I love him still;
And since his life you trust to me,
My verdict is that he be free."

XCIX

Turning on me her lustrous eyes
And stretching forth her trembling hand,
"Can you," she said, "those memories
Your life deplores yet understand;
Each happening to justify
Without remorse, without a sigh,
And face the future heart as free,
As was your wont in Tennessee?"

IN THE GRAY

C

Her outstretched hand I quickly grasped,
And felt my own as tightly clasped.
"My dread of life, my dear," said I,
"No longer on my heart does lie;
For with your presence disappeared
The comtumely sorrow feared,
And joy has banished all my pain,
By this sweet glance from you again."

CI

Music without a minor strain,
Is like a desert beaten plain;
And life without a pain or tear,
Is like an autumn bleak and sere.
So rising o'er my dark despair,
With Love's bright blossoms everywhere,
With blooms of joy on plants of shame,
Across my glowing fancy came;
And future hopes with brighter skies,
I saw in Mary Preston's eyes.

IN THE GRAY

CII

This love which came my life to bless,
Grew sacred in forgiveness;
Than she who gave me right to live,
Mortal could not more forgive.
And we who sinners' paths have trod,
Must some day ask for more from God.
If so let love blaze forth the way,
As love shall not be turned away.

THE FRESHMAN

With manners quite sagacious,
And hair somewhat setacious,
And ears like open oysters,
Most firmly attached,
He ambled into college,
In search he said of knowledge,
And every wing of sentiment,
Its incubators hatched.

He was suddenly elated,
By an order promulgated
From the journalistic quarters
Of our worthy president,
That a birch of strength and season,
Should be used to bring to reason,
The athletic pigskin kicker,
And the Latin impotent.

How he laughed upon beholding,
Through the tapestries unfolding,
Of the dingy little chapel,
The executive retired!

IN THE GRAY

What a dried up little figure,
Than a three cent piece no bigger,
And yet he dares to threaten
Like a paragraph inspired!

With a roar of riant laughter,
In the chapel two weeks after,
In the midst of prayer he trifled
With the censored college yell.
But his trusty friends betrayed him,
And refused therein to aid him,
In the prayerful silence left him
Screaming out such words as —well!

The president o'er his glasses,
Glanced around among his classes,
Till at length his eyes upon him
Rested like a burning coal;
While his hand he moved sedately,
Four young giants strong and stately,
Pounced upon the lawless ruffian,
And bandaged up his jowl.

Now he sees the path of error,
And around it walks in terror,

THE FRESHMAN

Most fearful of the *prestige* .
A little man can wield;
And even in the tussle,
No more he boasts of muscle,
But struggles for such armor
As a classic college shield.

SATAN'S REVIEW

The Devil got up in the morning
And examined his dart and spear,
Then the point of his caudal arrow,
And his hoofs like a mountain deer;
Like a youth he looked in his mirror,
And grimaced like a maid grown old,
At the fangs and the horns adorning
His features as yellow as gold.

Then with an aspect ferocious,
He glanced 'round the borders of Hell,
Majestically strode to his table
And summoned his aids with his bell.
The surface of Hell like a river
Where placid serenity stands,
At once was a tossing and foaming
With imps to obey his commands.

They came from the flame effervescent,
And ran to his parlor of state,
With news of the difficult vigils
That kept them out early and late.

SATAN'S REVIEW

In anger he raged at their conduct,
As each in his turn did relate,—
Then told them to lead not to follow,
The angry procession of Hate.

From Earth came the minions he summoned,
From vigils both stormy and gay,
Who told of the law-making bodies
They served through the previous day:
Of clergyman lured to support them,
And statesmen held fast in their snare,
Like Ixion bound everlasting
To the dominant wheel of his glare.

They told how fast virtue they tempted,
And where maiden purity fled;
They told how the aureoled leaders
Were dooming the people they led,
By preaching their gospel of hatred
Of those who had drifted astray;
They told that the mission of Jesus
Could nowhere be found in their way;

They told how his Majesty's papers
Were sowing the best sectional seeds,
By raising a doubt and suspicion
Against the Lord's holiest creeds;

IN THE GRAY

That only a few hateful decades,
With such basal reading could pass,
Ere his Majesty's merciless butchers
Would murder that innocent class.

That nowhere throughout their dominions,
Would preacher, uplifter or saint
Disgrace his exalted position,
By touching the stain or the taint;
They told where the church they had shackled
With fetters of silver and gold,—
The pomp of a prince for the parson,
The power of the press for his fold.

They told how the hatred of party
Kept parsons divided in twain,
How hatred of creed was advancing
To conflicts benevolent strain;
They lauded proud Caste as their bulwark,
Entrenched in the bastion of hate;
But deplored the school situation
For teaching the freedom of fate.

They deplored the statesman progressive,
The broad-minded clergyman too;
They told of his majesty's subjects
Who strayed from the blessings he strew,—

SATAN'S REVIEW

How some were converted by justice,
And others in prison immured;
How some had grown tired of the bauble,—
The fortune by birth they secured.

He railed like a tyro at Quitter,
For showing to the public his hand,
And swore he would frustrate his efforts
To live like a prince in the land;
He cried as he strove through his anger,
“The wretch that I nursed like a child,
Betrayes me in hope of promotion,
Like them of the savage and wild!

“And Blast with his eight publications,
Who once was my favorite pet,
To think of the good he'd accomplish
If he were but true to me yet!
A war he might coax up like Ranter,
O those were the glorious days,
When hatred sent souls by the thousands
To fan to a fury its blaze!

“That imp of perfection the teacher!
Has fought me since first he drew breath,
I'll conquer him yet or I'll perish,
And chide his theatrical death.

IN THE GRAY

There are Honor, Candor and Justice,
Who owe me nor dollars nor fame,
Go blast them with falsehood and malace,
And blacken each luminous name.

"Laud my subserviant senators,
And stint not the least in your praise;
They serve me the best of my children,
And cover with glory my days;
Give each one a ranch in Nebraska,
Some stock in a prosperous road,—
For they are the truest of servants,
To carry so much of my load.

"As I through the Party of Lincoln,
Have spread out my meshes of Graft,
His proud ruling queen of the ocean,
My skill has hewed down to a raft;
So through her much vaulted protection,
My choicest opinions shall glide,
And those who essay to oppose us,
Straight into a panic shall ride.

"And I from the Four Hundred's virtues
Have a modern Babylon made:
Such vices as fled from the sun-light,
No longer need hide in the shade.

SATAN'S REVIEW

Yet the loom of the forth coming ages
Some tanglesome problems shall weave;
But I with my subsidized teachers,
Each net-work of logic shall cleave.

"Bring Discord and Strife my best wishes,—
I never need fear them astray,
And Old Gossip too, ever loyal,
For fanning a fraternal fray;
To No-Hell the best of my church men,
Who preaches and writes like myself,
Convey the approval of mankind,
And send him for service my elf.

"Remember me kindly to judges,
Who serve in the Federal Courts,
In accord they act on suggestion,
And man me the stanchest of forts;
Put imps in their service as bailiffs,
Their officers criminal men,
The godly drag down by your warrants,
And make them respect even sin.

Strew flowers in the pathway of Doubter,
And burden his mind with such dreams,
As burden the soul with race hatred,
His tongue with subserviant themes:

IN THE GRAY

Not yet in all things has he served me,
But such careful grooming, you know,
Will make him respect my dominion,
And praise it and bless its bright glow.

To clergymen blocking my pathway,
Who preach of the Love and the Lord,
Give them each day such temptations,
As conquer the sage and the bard:
Them from their exalted position,
A scandal would draw like a charm,—
Once fallen! their labors would perish,
And save my dominion from harm.

To Bigot be kind in your mission,
Be careful and cause him no pain,
Deplore not his peevish discourses,
Nor frustrate his efforts at gain;
Give freedom to all his base judgements,
Support his desires as of worth:
His expressions are all my opinions,
His body my mansion on earth.

OFFERO THE GIANT

A giant there was in the days of old,
Of powerful presence and stature bold,
Who like the rest of the sons of men,
Was reared in a house and not in a den.

The persons he met with in daily life,
Obeyed the commands of fear and of strife;
As each one passed him on his service bent,
All serving the master of Discontent.

Offero, the giant, looked on the while,
And studied mankind with a doubtful smile;
While each of the servants who passed along,
Made much of his master in praise and song;
And each one declared from his humble sphere
That earth held only his master in fear.

Offero conscious of his powerful strength,
Resolved to achieve greater things at length,
Resolved to attach himself to a lord
More powerful than they the servants adored.

IN THE GRAY

The country he traveled from shore to shore,
To find the ruler those masters slaved for;
To a prince's castle at length he came,
With a base of rock and a crown of frame,
Which stood on the brow of a lordly hill,
Commanding tithes from the sea and till.

II

The prince he toiled for like a vassal free,
The bond to sever if they'd disagree;
He toiled in gardens mid the growing grain
And piled the harvest on the level plain;
From their mountain fastness he loosened
rocks
And squared and shaped them into building
blocks;
The towering forest fell before his axe,
And boulders sundered with a thousand cracks,
Beneath the thunder of his mighty maul,
Which shook the earth like earthquake in its
fall.

It chanced one night he heard the prince complain
About his tributes to the king's domain:

OFFERO THE GIANT

Of tithes and tariffs he expressed a fear
His envoy's message could gain the royal ear.

Offero noticed and the driving doubt
Crept through his thoughts crowding all
others out.

So he asked the prince if he feared the king.
"Alas!" quoth the prince, "to him tithes I
bring,
I serve him daily with my mind and hand,
And now, woe's me! he threatens my command."

"Well," quoth Offero, "if this king thou dread
And thou quakest in fear for thy royal head,
More powerful than thou must this ruler be,
So him shall I serve instead of thee."

III

So over the desert again he sped
In search of the king whom the princes dread.
He came to the castle and broad estate
Where lived the monarch whose word was fate.

IN THE GRAY

"O king," quoth he, when the ruler appeared,
"Art thou the master whose power is feared
By servants and masters and princes all,
Who serve and obey thee whatever thy call?"

"My word," quoth the king, "throughout all
the earth,
Is dreaded by princes whatever their birth,
Nor how lofty their station, my command,
Before me bareheaded makes all of them stand
stand."

"Then," answered Offero, "thee shall I serve,
For thee shall my judgment be on the verge;
My strength bear thy burdens distant and
near,
For thou art the master princes doth fear."

Through divers labors the proud king he
served,
And ne'er from the pathway of duty swerved,
Till doubt spread round him its devouring
flame,

OFFERO THE GIANT

When the king at the mention of Satan's
name,
Crossed himself quickly and trembled from
fear,
As if a conquering army stood near.

Offero saw with apparent surprise,
That even this King was cloaked in disguise.
At length he ventured a question to ask,—
“Who is this Satan and what is his task?
Why dost thou dread him if thou art so
strong?
Why dost thou tremble when he comes along?
Methinks this Satan thy master must be,
So him shall I serve instead of thee.”

IV

Again he wandered till at last he came
To Satan's castle on the mount of Fame,
And lounging round it in the noonday shade,
Were gorgeous splendor and its cavalcade:
Men immaculately dressed, foul of tongue,
Ballads of the viscious were by them sung;

IN THE GRAY

They judged unfortunates in divers ways,
For only Satan had a word of praise;
They cherished hatred of the race and creed,
Condemned the one with whom they disagreed;
For only they were to perfection next,
Sustained their wrongs by twisted Bible text,
Their lack of charity to justify
And make the Truth less potent than a lie;
They talked of goodness and of goodly things,
Of ethics fitted for the courts of kings,
Condemned the trifler for delay and doubt,
Assured the deist that science bore them out;
Hell they ridiculed as a crazy dream,—
A zealot's offspring, a fanciful theme.—

Their women were masculine, pompous, bold,
Were necklaced with diamonds, jewelled with
gold,
The season's fairest blossoms in their hair.
The parts of their bodies which were not bare,
Were covered with gauze so light and so thin,
That to look upon them was mortal sin.

They talked of conduct and etiquette made
And praised the hero with the gory blade;

OFFERO THE GIANT

Virtue they lauded as luminous, bright,
Yet courted pastimes in the lusty night.

A social leader was their cultured queen,
Of such refinement and such judgment keen,
That all the rest to emulate her style,
Aped her fashions, habits, conduct and smile.

Position pompous was the life desired,
As each to some proud leadership aspired:
They had clubs, politics and games of chance,
And displayed their charms in the mazy
dance.

On pleasure and control their aim was bent,
And chided humbled rivals' discontent.
Each lived and loved his Majesty to please,
And rounded nicely out a life of ease.
Charity they practised in a showy way,
But would give only what they spared away;
By long continued practises they came
To play successfully the manly game,
Could smoke and gamble, guide a launch at sea
And do man's pastimes just as well as he.

One day a galaxy supreme and grand,
Of women beautiful and men as bland

IN THE GRAY

As pride and passion could commingled make,
Resolved to journey for the pleasure's sake.

Ahead rode Satan uniformed and crowned,
Behind the subjects true and faithful found,
Throughout the nations they careened in sport,
And gifted monarchs trembled in their court,
To see such power throughout the empires
dawn—

Pleasure made a king, honest toil a pawn.

It pleased Offero Satan's power to see,
Kings, princes, masters all on bended knee;
And in his heart a certain pride he felt
When kings and princes with his master dealt.

To a famous city one day they came:
The design! its conquest in Satan's name.
And as they marched through the principal
street,
Their splendor pronounced them the earth's
elite;

And as they ventured toward the city square,
An impious challenge was standing there,
For right before them in the market moss,
Was standing the emblem,—a granite cross.

OFFERO THE GIANT

"Cursed be those monks!" quoth Satan in
disgust,
"Must my adherents by their promised trust,
Defeated, baffled and converted be?"
In rage he fumed at this extremity
And turned to leave by a less traveled road,
As crestfallen as if lashed by a goad.

Offero pitied his dejected look
And offered to search each vale, cave and
nook,
Those monks to find and before him to bring,
For offending his majesty the king.

"Alas!" quoth Satan, "'Tis not them I fear,
But their Master who always lingers near."
Quoth Offero, "That Master will I bring
And compel him acknowledge thee, O King!"
"Too great his power," quoth Satan with a
sigh,
He guides the Earthquake, lets the lightning
fly;
Sweeps the earth with tornadoes in their
flight,
And lashes billows up to mountain height."

IN THE GRAY

"Then," quoth Offero, "Thou fearest Him I
see;

So Him shall I toil for instead of thee."

Satan angered saw Offero depart,

But saved his legions from a change of heart;

Back home he led them without further loss,

Avoiding places where he saw the Cross.

V

Offero imaged in his mind the king,

Possessed of forces that could Satan sting,

As he journeyed the Monk's abode to find

And list his services for all mankind.

The monks he found a digging in the mould,

Not as prospectors for the haughty gold,

But toilers in a vegetable field,

Producing harvests in abundant yield;

Their converts with them sweating in the sun

Struggling with burdens their approval won.

"Where are the monks?" Offero thundered
loud,

Hoping to meet great kings or princes proud.

OFFERO THE GIANT

"At thy service," the abbott meekly said,
Let fall his spade and gently raised his head,
Surveyed the giant, "What wouldst thou with
me,
What service master can we render thee?"

Offero viewed him with dismay and doubt,
How such as he could Satan put to rout,
And asked him fiercely in commanding tone,
To lead him promptly to his proud King's
throne!

"To meet my King," the abbott meekly said,
"One must upon the bread of Life be fed,
He must for others make a sacrifice,
Abandon folly and its kindred vice,
Uplift the wretched and support the poor,
Keep for his enemies an open door."

"That shall I do," Offero answered low,
"Now be my guide, thy Master to me show."
"Nay," quoth the monk, "thy service first must
be,
Thy heart must change before my Lord
thou'lt see,
Long years must thou serve him in divers ways,
Before thou'lt merit his support and praise;

IN THE GRAY

Great glory and promotion shall be thine
If in His service thou increase His vine."

"Which vine?" quoth Offero, gazing at the
grapes,

"The black or green, the smooth or gnarled
shapes."

"O," quoth the monk, "Thou canst not under-
stand

Till first thou serve Him with thy heart and
hand."

"Assign me a task that I may begin
As serve Him I shall, His promises to win."

"Now shall we grant thee the request thou ask,
In our King's service a most difficult task,
Methinks thy figure and commanding form
Art well adapted to defy the storm;
So over at the ford the cataract
Leaps high in fury oft in tryst or pact
With rising flood or melancholy breeze,
Engulfs our people in those swollen seas.
Methinks that thou couldst pilot them across
And save our people from untimely loss."

OFFERO THE GIANT

Offero sanctioned and stationed at the ford,
Commenced his labor for his King and Lord;
His service lengthened into days, months,
years,

Through grimy toil and tragedy and tears;
The lives he saved, entrusted to his care,
And crossed the ford in stormy flood and fair.
The years had graven furrows in his cheek
And stole the vigor that his youth did seek,
The hair once black and curly in its strength,
Grew white in service of unequalled length.
But best of all a change within his soul,
Made Faith the anchor of his heart's control;
Time had taught him each hidden light to find
Within the myriad chambers of his mind.
Praises fell lightly as a thing apart,—
He served all mankind with an open heart;
Mankind he served his better self to raise,
And hoped thereby to win his Master's praise.

It chanced one night in darkness wild and rain,
With roaring thunder and a hurricane,
A voice he heard from one within the night,—
A plaintive voice imploring aid and light.—
A lone child in storm and darkness lost,
Beset by dangers and by terrors crossed,

IN THE GRAY

Besought Offero save him from the storm,
To cross the ford to shelter safe and warm.

Upon his shoulders he placed the pleading
child,
Breasted the waters and storm fierce and wild;
But ere the center of the ford was gained,
Above the rocks the dreadful torrent strained;
Breast high in surging insolence the flood,
In seething wave against his pathway stood.
From cliff to crag the lightning flashed and
leaped
And drowning darkness was around him
heaped;
The thunder rocked the world in its sound,
And falling torrents surged and foamed around.

Such storm the ford had never known before,
With wind and wave and thunder's dreadful
roar.
As onward he pressed in danger and dread,
The child grew heavier; and his trembling
tread
Pressed from their moorings the earth-bound
rocks
With weight and force that all creation mocks.

OFFERO THE GIANT

So heavy grew the child a single feather
On his shoulder laid would plunge together
To the seething foam the giant and child,
Where angry waters in confusion piled.
With powerful energy he struggled on,
Until at last the distant port was won;
As he entered the erstwhile darksome room,
Windowless, black, and lonely as the tomb,
The child now lighter grown, upon the floor
He placed, while lights unseen by him before,
Of mellowed brilliance, soothing to the eye,
From neither wick nor fagot he could spy,
From nowhere, everywhere, lit up the room,
Dispelling every trace of shade or gloom.

Offero wondered while around he gazed,
Surprised at the scene his earth bound vision
dazed;

Forgetful of the child arrayed in white,
O'er whom was shed the soul inspiring light;
In perfect manhood there he stood full grown,
King from the universe's greatest Throne;
As if divining from his mind the thought,
Said, "Lo! Offero what thou long hast sought
Since service claimed thee at this dangerous ford,
To meet and serve thy Master and thy Lord,

IN THE GRAY

To thee is granted and thy meed shall be
Henceforth in Paradise along with me."

The morning dawned forgetful of the night,
And hundreds gathered at the ford in fright,
To view the wreckage of the dreadful storm
Or save some belated traveler from harm.
The ford was peaceful as in perfect calm,
Was low and quiet with a growing palm,—
Offero's staff to all the place well known,—
Beside the path since sunset there had grown;
The dangerous ford Offero's presence blest
For half a century surged as if depressed,
For no Offero on the rocks was seen,
Nor on the borders gently sloping green;
But when they entered at his cabin door,
There calm and tranquil stretched upon the
 floor,
With sunbeams resting on his locks of gray,
In all the majesty of death he lay;
The smiling features placid and serene,
Bespoke the vision which his eyes hath seen.

THE QUADROON

She was twenty, perhaps twenty-one,
When first her struggle of life begun;
She was plump of figure, fair of face,
And traveled forth with such ease and grace
That men in their hurry stopped to view
Her exquisite style and neatness too.

Her dusky father, a boot-black's aid,
The long expense of her schooling paid,
Till she was schooled from the A, B, C,
Up to a liberal arts degree.
Then from the college her youthful dream
Came down to paddle in Life's dull stream;
She measured her talents with those who rose
To pomp and power from poverty's throes,
For such positions she begged in vain,
Then lower dropped and applied again,
Till lower still,—on the labor scale,
She saw her last application fail.

Nor was this all,—the insults she bore,
In her search for toil, her bosom tore:

IN THE GRAY

For in this search she had met with men,
Who were white without but black within,
Who openly marked her for their prey,
And fashioned their pitfalls in her way.
But from the lure of those wretches vile,
She passed with a self assuring smile.

She saw in the dawn the high drawn shore
That slammed in her face its open door,
And pressed on her lips a traitor's kiss
To entice and lure her life amiss.

And yet she must live, the humblest slave,
From life's false promise as firm and brave
And true to the last to Life's behest,
With hope in reward of eternal rest.

But from the allurements life lays down,
Can she emerge unscathed and crown
Her swarthy skin with a soul snow white,
Fitted to shine in the realms of Light?

Or if she falls, is yours the sin,
Who refused her toil her bread to win?
Are you her "keeper" you white-faced wretch,
Who placed the pitfalls her feet to catch?

THE REIGN OF THE CADS

A nation once unfrilled and plain,
Rose high among the nations,
And pulled the haughty banners down
Of all her proud realtions.

Her sturdy sons from honest toil,
Would spring to her in trouble,
And never for a moment rest
Till wealth and strength were double.

But times advanced and careless sons
Allowed a slight deflection;
And into every office crept
A cad without detection.

When suddenly the war-cloud spread
And darkened all our pages
With cannon smoke and bursting shell
And wisdom from the sages.

IN THE GRAY

The foe was lurking near our coast,
With cannon toward us pointed;
Our cads were hugging close to shore,
As if by fate disjointed.

At last our haughty captain cad,
With lace and braid bedizened,
Flung out the finest oraflamme
That ocean waves horizoned.

A lonely shore, a single mule,
Before his visage looming;
And he with hair erect from fright,
Set all his cannon booming.

Then straightway to his country came,
And told the fearful story,
How on the distant hillside lay
The foe all torn and gory.

His temple veins stood out like cords,
While telling of his dangers;
His chest inflated rounded out,
While he enlightened strangers.

THE REIGN OF THE CADS

But scouts of ocean soon brought word,
That foes were closely lurking,—
That cads commanding battle-ships,
Their duty had been shirking.

So in the terror of the time,
A sailor brave and fearless,
Was sent to search the ocean waste,
So dismal and so cheerless.

He found the foe among the waves,
For final fight and ready;
He straightway opened all his guns
With rapid fire and steady.

He sank the crafts they had afloat,
But saved the dripping sailors,
And brought them safely to his shore,
Like arctic laden whalers.

But when arrived at home he found
The cads for fame preparing,
And he who killed the mule was hailed
The hero of sea faring.

IN THE GRAY

And he who sank the crafts was called
To answer virile charges,
About the loops his vessel made
Among the foeman's barges.

The court comprised of members three,—
Two leaders of cotillions,
And one a hero world renowned,
Well known and loved by millions,

Assembled at the capital,
To duplicate the quarrel,
And settle from the evidence,
To whom belonged the laurel.

So from the make-up of the court,
'Tis you that should determine
The wearers of the gilded braid,
And who should wear the ermine.

MEXICO'S AILMENT

My friends, if you should like to know
What ails our neighbor Mexico,
I'll tell you if you will agree
To swallow what was told to me.

"Her governors to power must rise
Like comets in the starry skies,
And blaze a trail of blood and tears
From herdman's hut among his steers,
O'er mountain peak and gorse and plain,
O'er petty towns and foemen slain,
To the Plaza whose sacred bower
Shelters their tyranny of power."

"Not so," say others, "This the way,—
The fault is theirs who preach and pray;
They teach their flock to serve the Lord,
But for the state have ne'er a word;
They serve Him too but leave the state
To Satan and his potentate."

"You're wrong," say others, "list to me,
Her ruler must a Mason be,

IN THE GRAY

And has been such since Santa Ann
Her revolutions first began,
And he despises priest and church,
And holds them both beneath the birch;
He taxes for his cause the state,
Then blames the priests and church for fate."

"Nonsense!" some knowing folk declare,
"The cause is in her fetid air;
Her torrid clime malaria breeds,
Which drives those brain-sick fools to deeds
As low as any child might do,
When trusted with a gun or two."

"All wrong," the wise professor said,
While viewing a million years ahead,
"'Tis Indian blood and Spaniard too,
Which time nor trial can't subdue;
They'll keep it up and shoot and clave,
Till the last one is in his grave."
Then tightly screwing up his eyes,
Till he could fain see Paradise,
"Our anglo-saxons knew the way
To bring the Indian 'neath their sway,
As Indians all are good when dead,
So all of ours are good," he said.

A PRAYER

O Christ! thou all sublime in power,
And pilot of the righteous way!
Be with us all through every hour,
Lead us lest we go astray.

Thy spirit to us sinners send
To influence our lives and acts;
And let us not our mission end,
By joining Satan in his pacts.

Teach me my destined end and aim,
And teach me Jesus, how to pray;
Remove me from all earthly claim:
For now I know Thou art the Way,

Remove me from the earth bound ties,
That bind me to this sordid sphere,
That I among the worldly wise
May see through fame and wealth thy fear.

I know thou canst the fates control
And swing the heavenly systems free;
So from thy power grant this poor soul
A measure of thy charity.

THE WISE CROW

The black-eyed crow in proud defiance,
Loud his lusty challenge brawls;
From the dead branch on the tree top,
To his stanch retainers calls.
His "caw, caw, caw!" is strained in fury,
As it shivers through the boughs,
And every now and then a chorus,
From his fellows does arouse.

Beneath the branches on the heather,
Groping without chart or law,
Staggering on unsteady pinions,
Was stout hearted Patrick Caw.
The growing hours he whiled in grog-shops,
Bibbing freely grape and rye,
Until the dimly dying twilight,

Told him that the night was nigh.
So with the courage of a dragon,
Fearing neither man nor ghost,
He started up the icy highway,
Stepping high and falling most.

THE WISE CROW

When from the dreary zero woodland,
Came his name in threatening tone,
He turned his steps toward the intruder,—
Spurred by anger staggered on.
The closer came his step unwelcome,
Louder rang the threatening "Caw!"
With every now and then a chorus
From the rookery in awe.
Pat challenged first to single combat
All defamers of his name;
Then peeled his coat and vest and collar,
Squared himself and called again;
So louder came a shrilly chorus
From the hundred overhead.
"Hauld on!" cried Pat, "Go slow bejabbers,
One at a toime's what Oi said!"

So forth he peeled like pugs at Reno,
To the last his underwear;
And standing there before the Frost King,
Just as icy, just as bare,
Issued challenge after challenge,
His detractors all to awe;
And the wise old crow in pity
To his comrades murmured "Caw!"

IN THE GRAY

THE HEIRESS

Has wealth a charm of rhythmic grace,
A magnetic pull on each and all?
The heiress needs not beauty of face,
Nor shapely figure at banquet hall!
Do gallants love her who claim they do,
Who heed her words and bask in her smile?
Or does her beauty to them shine through
Her shapeless figure of doric style?
Perhaps it does, perhaps they're true,
Perhaps they honestly prate of love!
But truly dear, while they bill and coo
Like the false magpie and widowed dove,
Why, why does he turn his ogling eyes
Away from the form his lips bespeak;
Unless like you and me his prize
Is the sparkling eye and dimpled cheek?

THE ABBOTT OF PADUA

A pious abbot as he walked one day,
Reflecting ever and anon to pray,
Whene'er a subject of disease or sin
Shone forth in forms where virtue should have
 been.

Through Padua his saintly steps were guiled,
With visions blissful as a simple child,
With here and there a word of hope and cheer,
To lift the wretched from themselves so drear.

He sauntered onward through a dismal street,
Reading features of those he chanced to meet;
Reading poverty, wretchedness, and care,
Young dissipation and aged despair;
Aged features deeply graven by vice,
Faces that mocked the world, yet paid its
 price.

He saw the wretchedness of pagan life,
Struggling under sin, rising over strife;
He saw before him rolled the barren field
Where heavens harvest in abundant yield,
Should grow like meadow in a favored plain,
Nourished by climate and favored by rain.

IN THE GRAY

The further he walked those despairing
streets,

The further he saw into sins retreats.

Nowhere encountered he a genial face,

So worldly free as to accept God's grace.

For those creatures unrepentant he sighed,

And like their mentor in despair he cried;

For with them he should make his new found
home

As God's messenger just arrived from Rome.

To spread the Gospel and the Scriptures
teach,

To such heathen as chanced within his reach;

To go amidst the haunts of vice and sin,

And strive to elevate his fellow men,

His mission was and keenly did he strive

To keep his small celestial spark alive;

For all he counseled taunted him with jeers,

And low despairing gave he way to tears.

His onward walk past hovels dark and low,

Past which th'incessant human tide did flow,

Brought him to the Beggars' Board face to
face,

A dark, desolate, solitary place,

THE ABBOTT OF PADUA

For no spot so lonely as where the crowd
In dreary monotone implores aloud.
He heard the babbling infant cry for bread,
And saw the grandsire bow his hoary head,
As naught from poverty could pain allay,
And none but God could succor such as they:
The rich too proud to listen to his prayer;
The poor too low to rise above their care.
But as he pondered in despairing grief,
From a source unseen came a sure relief.

As the wretched subjects and their cries he
neared,
A beggar ragged and unkempt appeared
With outstretched hands imploring from him
aid,
To save his flesh from wants upon it laid.
The abbott meekly swept him with his eye,
And gave him his last coin while passing by;
Beside him then the beggar set his pace,
And sauntered with him as he left the place;
He talked of wretchedness vice and sin,
The crimes of nations and the crimes of men;
And asked the abbott if he hoped to save
His sinful subjects from damnations wave,

IN THE GRAY

By pious walks devoutly wrapt in prayer,
Without a word of Him who sent him there.
"So take these creatures from their sin and
 woe,
To the path to heaven which is yours to show,
And place them in it, guide them in the light,
Away from error and its rayless night;
Toil among them; the Spirit will thee serve,
And strengthen thee when folly bids thee
 swerve;
Despise them not though sin has brought
 them low,
Their Father loves them and will overthrow
Through you his servant every vested sin,
That keeps them from Him and His heavenly
 kin."

Attracted by this speech the abbott gazed
With marked surprise at him who virtue
 praised;
And as he gazed, beneath the ragged coat,
He saw such neatness and the clean white
 throat
Beneath his flowing auburn colored beard,
That conscious of his guest, he inward feared.

THE ABBOTT OF PADUA

With "Peace be with you, hither must I go."
The beggar vanished like a flake of snow;
He turned neither to the left nor right,
But like the lightning passed away from sight.
The wondering abbot in amazement peered
To find whither his guest had disappeared.

The coin he gave his hunger to allay,
Fell bounding, spinning on the pavement gray;
The abbot picked it up and round his frame
A soothing current through his system came,
At its touch, healing him from every ill,
Pacifying his mind, strengthening his will.

Thenceforth with energy renewed and fresh,
He taught the Gospel and he healed the flesh.
The coin worked miracles beyond compare,
Transformed the leper, checked diseases rare,
Made the crippled dwarf in perfection rise,
The babbling idiot equal to the wise.
Long years he labored in the sacred cause,
Expounding doctrine and religious laws;
Bringing to his faith converts from the low,
Toiling multitudes destined far to go;
The wealthy also from their power and pride,
Embraced his doctrine; lowly by his side

IN THE GRAY

They served the Master, and beneath the
cross

Renounced the devil and his worldly dross.
The wave enlightning as it onward spread,
Swept o'er the empires with amazing dread
To past traditions and their allied kin,
The glowing attributes of vested sin.
So in its wake the temple royal rose,
Soothing the weary, comforting their woes,
And placing in the breast of all mankind,
A Hope celestial from the Godly Mind.

THE RECLUSE

On a gently sloping terrace,
Fringed with rugged mountain pines,
Is a rudely fashioned cottage,
Overrun with creeping vines.

There dwells an aged hermit,
From society estranged,
Who in its dismal twilight,
Sees how Love's fond soul has changed.

Past the door a mountain torrent,
Murmurs to him night and day,
Of the fiery youthful passion
Of his heart when young and gay.

Down the slope the crushing snow-slide,
Tearing wild in mad career,
Levels all that lies before it,
Like the love of youthful cheer.

From the distance comes a vision
Of the years when he was young,
Of a charming blue-eyed maiden,
And the songs their childhood sung,

IN THE GRAY

Of the hope and happy promise,
When she pledged, her hand in his,
To join to his her future
In the life of lasting bliss.

But the angel of Destruction
Spread his pall of early blight;
And she among the perished
Left him mourning day and night.

So still his lonely living
Claims from man or friend no sigh:
Yet he lives to love in silence
In the happy days gone by.

THE OAK

With limbs extended high and wide,
And downward branches sweeping low;
With leafy plumes on every side
The sturdy oaks in patience grow.

With roots that gnarl and spread and sink,
Till downward in the dark blue clay,
The nectar from the earth they drink,
And grow in honest virtue's way.

Its giant branches fan the air,
And toss and turn the mighty storm,
Defending with unending care
Its every fibre safe from harm.

Its trembling leaves the zephyrs beat,
Its limbs the hurricane must net;
Its trunk is strained by summer heat,
Its roots by winter frosts are set.

Nor rest nor peace the oak-tree knows
From sprouting plant to giant dead:
The storms of life that round it blows,
The same on you and me are spread.

IN THE GRAY

Of the hope and happy promise,
When she pledged, her hand in his,
To join to his her future
In the life of lasting bliss.

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The same on you and me are spread.

IN THE GRAY

For this the child unborn must sweat,
When creditors present their bills,
And humble poor must pay the debt
That monarchs set against their tills.

Is not this high, the price of kings?
Should not a freeborn people be
Wheree'r the song bird freely sings,
And sunshine seeks the would be free?

THE CHICAGO GIRL

Her figure is purchased at Marshall Field's
Her complexion from Madame Yale;
Her hair the dead or the pauper yields
From confined silence or slimy jail.

Her gown is a dream from the looms of
France,
Her hat is the fasion in gay Patee;
The plumes that wave with her step and
dance,
Were plucked in the deserts of Zambesi.

Her furs are martin and mink and seal,
Her diamonds from far off Bloemfontein;
Her bracelet, an effort of love and zeal,
From some poor toiler in Klondike's mine.

The princess she rivals in style and dress,
And like the princess she entertains;
The social columns she cons in the press,
And accents her speech like the Newport
thanes.

IN THE GRAY

Her father answers the whistle and bell,
And toils in the rolling mills grime and smoke,
And often in grogshops I've heard him tell
The reason why he is always "broke."

THE TITANIC

Defensively armored she breasted the billows,
Her hulk of the length of three city blocks;
Her cabins and parlors upholstered with
pillows,
Where barons and princes might dabble in
stocks.

Graceful she glided the swell of the ocean;
The storms and calms to her were as naught;
Her passengers joined with her grandeur the
motion
Of feasting and dancing, with revelry fraught.

The tempest broke round her like mist on
the mountain,
Nor left from its rack such a scattering gale
As might turn the drops of a pebble dashed
fountain,
To fly o'er the greensward and burst on the
vale.

IN THE GRAY

As proud as a monarch she cleaved the sea
valleys;
As calm as a giant she scattered the foam,
While fiercely through tidal capped billows she
rallies,
As strong in defiance as Everett's dome.

Loud pealed the laughter where wealth had
assembled;
Calmly they smiled in the parlors of pride;
A baronial banquet the diners resembled,
As each in his turn to amuse the guests tried.

When suddenly pitched to the foremost parti-
tion,
And crashed against banister, stairway and
wall,
Flew tables and guests like the sums in addi-
tion,
To pile up a column or crush one in all.

Then up from the steerage the seafoam came
purging,
With men, women, children, all struggling to
float,

THE TITANIC

When over the decks the mad sea came surging,
And down sank the best of the world's great boats.

There is crepe on the door of the world's great nations
And weeds on the bonnets where flowers prevailed,
And man from his humble but penitent stations,
Admits that his craft cannot be assailed.

IN THE GRAY

THE CUBIST

An outrage? Believe it not,
But rather study the race's rot,
 Since far Perfection's day;
Just glance across the few brief years,
And view the woman and her peers,
Where Vanity sits up and jeers,
 And lures them all away!

Pursue the crowded thoroughfare,
A shopping day when bargains glare,
For just a block or two,
And every second step you take,
A freak you pass—a female rake—
Whose face and form Futurists make
 Resemble life as true.

And true it is in every line,
Just as ugly, just as fine,
 As life itself in them.
Those freaks of fashion rise and fall,
As man permits them from his thrall;
Their disproportioned figures all
 Are made for love of him.

THE CUBIST

So man while building social laws,
For woman's sake a moment pause,
 Before it is too late!
Those freaks will make a barren den
The home of all your future men:
So what of virtue, what of Sin,
 When such control their state?

The woman has as Adam found,
The Devil always lurking 'round;
 And yours it is to see
That all that Life and Love have cost,
Be not on vapid changelings lost,
Nor to the Devil idly tossed
 By such an Eve as she.

IN THE GRAY

A TRIP

Upon the sea a trip I took,
To reach a port not far beyond;
The waves the goodly vessel shook .
Like shingles on a river pond.

The vessel faced the open main
Where naught ahead appeared but sea,
And tossed and plunged with creaking strain,
Through crested wave and blast more free.

I watched my native scenes recede
Till one lone hill was left in view,
And that diminished by the speed
Was lost at length in ocean's blue.

But as I turned to face the main
And view the lonely ocean's close;
Lo! at the bow, both high and plain
The port I sought before me rose.

Perhaps the trip of life shall be
Like this upon the ocean's blue:
When lost to sight are earth and sea,
The Shore we seek shall rise in view.

UNREST

How danced the sunbeam on the sea,
The fickle, surging, rolling sea!
Aslant in gorgeous colors gleamed,
From wave to wave its bright shafts streamed
With colors all prismatic teemed
Like Beauty blest by joyful glee!

The hollow trough between the waves,
The nervous, restless, tossing waves!
Was than the grave of Hope more dark,
Without a colored ray or spark,
Save here and there a lounging shark
Shed lurid gleams like human knaves.

Yet in the sea the sunken trough,
The brackish, fearful, grewsome trough!
Will rise and soar aloft in turn
And with the hues of heaven burn.
While seething thus the sea nymphs churn
The troughs and waves and laugh and scoff.

IN THE GRAY

This restless spirit of the world,
The ruthless, reckless, thoughtless world!
Perhaps is surging to and fro
Within our lives to make us grow
Above the morbid, false, and slow
To thoughts that God around us whirled.

Perhaps the universal soul,
The perfect, sacrificing soul,
Is restless like the sea and wind
Within the lives of human kind;
And draws us to the immortal Mind
Where active billows surge and roll.

A TORTOISE

Around the curb a tortoise swam,
And strove at times its walls to ram,
 To find a landing place;
Three times around he made the trip,
His polished shell an armored ship,
Still found himself in Neptune's grip,
 Bound to a given base.

His every want was there supplied
From nature's store and civic pride,
 Yet strove to pass his bounds:
A moment free the thoughtless throng
Would crush the life he saved so long,
Nor deem it e'en a passing wrong
 To cover him with wounds.

And then methought how oft I yearned
To pass the bounds kind nature turned,
 To higher broader planes.
Perhaps like him success might bring
Much disappointment and the sting
Which to our feeble natures cling
 Like tendrils to old fanes.

IN THE GRAY

While here the wants of life are given,—
The best of earth, the hope of heaven,—
 Why seek a broader sphere?
'Tis here that God would have me stay,
And has so circumscribed my way,
That farther hence I cannot stray,
 Nor o'er the border peer.

KNOW YE

Know ye not my toiling brothers,
That the burdens of today,—
The failure and the heart ache,
The sorrow and dismay,—
Are the penance that the ages
From the dark and dismal past,
Like the essence of a night cloud
O'er your brief existance cast.

Know ye also toiling millions,
That for every tear that's shed,
There's a balm in far creation
Never meant for mortal head;
That your suffering and anguish
Get no aid in Mercy's name
Nor your sad and lone bereavement,
E'en a tear from Pity claim.

Know ye that the ache and illness,
And the burdens of the mind,
Are the legacies of sorrow
Sin bequeathed to human kind;

IN THE GRAY

Know that dark and drear the pathway,
Bounded on both sides by strife,
That the vestments of the angels
Burn like fire the path of life.

Know ye too that disappointments,
Like the ever changing wind,
Turn to blight your cherished prospects,
All your hopes and fancies find;
That no fear shall bring you pleasure,
Or no future power or joy;
That your triumphs dwindle sadly,
When you learn their base alloy.

Know ye all that human mercy
Sings from hell its fiendish strain,
Burning transport in the giver,
In the taker shame and pain.
How the heart subdued or broken,
Yields to man's degrading cost!
Just because the sacred mission—
Christ and Charity—is lost!

Know ye seekers after Justice,
That the wisdom of the world
Is but style that fickle fashion
From her mountain temple hurled:

KNOW YE

Like the styles her systems vary,
 Sending forth each day in youth,
Tracts some sage has just discovered,
 Branded like the rest with "Truth".

Know ye seekers after Jesus
 That the hell within your souls,
Must be quenched that pride and passion
 Lure you not to evil goals:
Yet the evil lives triumphant,
 And our guides in heaven's name,
Serve the lawless cause of Satan
 For a moment's praise or fame.

Know ye reckless youthful dreamers,
 That your castles built in air,
Like the mist upon the mountain,
 Will dissolve in colors rare,
Leaving you the unfulfillment
 Of your cherished hope on earth,—
The vacuity of promise,—
 That you fostered since your birth.

Know ye disappointed mortals,
 That the love and peace ye crave,
Like the bright eternal morning,
 Lies beyond the welcome grave:

IN THE GRAY

For in life are all things blighted
By the pomp and power of hell;
So in death we seek perfection
Where the just of ages dwell.

THE BEAR

A Bear there was and he gorged on junk
His cravings to satisfy;
And from the marshes he drank till drunk,
Yet his throat was always dry.

He swallowed the Finn near the frozen main,
And the Lapp by the cold White Sea;
The Pole he devoured on the Lamberg plain,
Like fruit of the forbidden tree.

He drank down the Tartar where Lena glides,
To souse well the mixture below;
The Georgian next from where Caucasus hides
His summits in eternal snow.

The very next gulp the Korean went down,
Embracing the peaceable Jap;
Manchuria followed,—the yellow and brown,—
Scarce causing old Bruin to Gape.

IN THE GRAY

But when with contending foes he was filled,
Who failed in their strength to agree,
His longing for more was instantly stilled
By battles they waged to be free.

The Lapp got to work and the Jap got to
work,
And the Pole and the blundering Finn,
And joined by the Tartar and menacing Turk
They waged a fierce struggle within.

So like a gored panther the bear himself
threw,
While his belly was punctured and torn,
Imploring a hand or a pill to subdue
The victuals he swallowed that morn.

So now, my good people, this moral attest:
When you gulp down a nation, beware!
Be sure that it's dead, or 'twill never digest,
And cause you distress like the bear.

A MODERN DIOGENES

When walking forth one evening fair,
Along a country road
Where golden rods and asters bowed,
And setting sunbeams flowed,
An aged man I overtook
Of calm and anxious air,
Whose face with care was furrowed deep,
And thin and white his hair.

"I've traveled 'round for sixty years
In stormy climes and mild,
Among the so called civilized,
The savage and the wild,"
Began this aged, careworn man,
While glancing close at me,
"To find on earth a Christian heart
That's filled with charity.

"List to yon shriveled female's plaint:
Some fallen sister's woe
She cries aloud that passing winds
May bear it to and fro;

A MODERN DIOGENES

Unmindful e'en of truth she adds
New scandals to the tale,
That scandal mongers may repeat
As truth to charm the stale.

"Yon irate fellow man behold:
Some neighbor's chattel crossed
The poor domain he calls his own
A few brief years at most;
Yet hear him shriek in vengeful mood,
And curse like hell's despair,
Unmindful that the accident
Was sent from heaven's chair.

"Behold yon haughty clergyman
Who knows the Virtues all,
Ignore that wretched sinner's plea,
Who on him deigned to call;
Though vice is stamped upon his brow,
And murder in his heart,
No man so low but charity
Both Faith and Love impart.

"Yon learned doctor, if you please,
A moment short survey;
He strives to part that man and wife
Who quarreled but today;

THE MODERN DIOGENES

The love grown cold he fans to hate
With divers plots and tales,
And plays upon their weaknesses
Like wind on happy vales.

"O Man, thou wretched jest of Time!
Dressed with a moment's power,
Why scourge the less successful wretch,
For coveting thy flower?
Yet him behold with court and press,
His rivals name beguile,
As if to thwart the threatened doom
Such ones he should defile.

"Hark to the tale this zephir bears
From yonder woodland dell:
Poor maid she lists to tales of love,
But love as false as hell!
'Tis conquest guides the sinful heart,
In nations as in men,
And robs of peace the trusting souls,
Puts pain where joy hath been.

"No charity in Power you find,
No trust in statecraft's theme;
Diplomacy is but a lie,
And friendship but a dream.

IN THE GRAY

Our faith in God is lost to us,
By wealth's prolific plan,
Since he who claims to trust his God,
Must trust his fellow man.

"Our men have dwindled into oafs
Through life's effulgent glare;
Our women ape the spawn of fame,
And all its notice share:
The present like a tyrant rules
In selfishness and pride,
Unseen the future glides along,
Where heaven and hope abide.

"O Time! how fast the years are drawn
Across our brief career!
From youth to age is but a span
Where power and pride appear;
But after that, O thoughtless one!
The long eternal day
Will dawn to curse or bless the life
So lightly thrown away!

"So now, young friend," to me he said,
"Teach charity to all,
Forgive the sinners wretched life
And lead him from his thrall;

THE MODERN DIOGENES

**Allow no words to pass your lips,
No thoughts within your mind,
That do not teem with charity
For erring human kind.**

**"For thoughts of man, though good or ill,
Shall live for evermore,
And heaven or hell make for the soul
They censure or adore;
Your die is cast within this sphere
Where Love must rise and reign,
If you from hell's obscurity,
Would conquer sin and pain."**

IN THE GRAY

WON WITH ROSES

A maiden fair with a sparkling eye
Of heaven's cerulean blue,
With a smile for all and a labored sigh,
That told of a lover in days gone by,
Yet strove on the wreck of romance to try
For a heart still kind and true.

Her lovers assembled by the score,
From various walks of life:
The youth full of passion his promise bore,
And by all the gods of the world he swore
That her alone would he ever adore,
Through the trials of calm and strife.

The village pedagogue too made suit,
In calm but modest way,
And pledged for her hand and heart the fruit
Of toil and struggle and love to boot,
Which blended together like leaf and root,
His heart and his soul of clay.

The recreant lover again appeared
With pleadings loud and vain;
His voice somewhat husky, his bleak eyes
bleared,

WON WITH ROSES

Yet by her mother his visits were cheered,
While at her table his castles were reared
Like those erected in Spain.

An elderly gentleman smiling came,
With roses his suit to press;
And never rival or fop did he name,
But jested and smiled at the praise and blame
Of jealous contenders, till to his claim,
She smilingly answered "Yes."

IN THE GRAY

THE MODERN VENUS

A man there was who had hair as gray
As a cotton slope at the close of day,
When twilight spreads her veil,
A maid he wooed with a roguish eye,
A coquettish wink and a virgin sigh,
Which lured him hither to try and try
To pierce her heart of mail.

She answered "I will," when he proposed,
And embraced his hands when he disclosed
Bank bills, silver and gold;
His silver and gold for style she spent,
In the same channels his bank bills went,
Till alas, alas! he hadn't a cent,
Nor shield against the cold.

She turned him down, this false coquette,
(If I mistake not he's swearing yet)
And clasped a former beau;
In the evening time they laugh and smile
At the fool who gave them home and style,
Nor knew the deceit of maiden wile,
Till romance laid him low.

THE SUFFRAGETTE

In life's broad highway have you met
A brain diseased, delusion set,
In what is called a suffragette,
 In peace or war,
Whose vain ambition is to get
 A coat of tar?

A woman she by build and birth,
Despite the fact she deems the earth
Too full of joy and lawless mirth,
 For sovereign man,
Too weak and empty in its dearth
 Of pipes of pan.

Her hatchet and her hatchet face,
She shies and pushes into place
With maudlin vim and ape grimace,
 Where'er she can,
To place her foremost in the race,
 A cheering fan.

IN THE GRAY

And why her crimes? ye gods look down!
She wants to rule the home and town,
To vote all false opinions down,
 Except her own,
To wear a bacchus colored frown
 Where love has flown.

You poor unsexed, delusioned "It!"
If you but chewed the cud you bit,
You'd find DuBarry's rulings fit
 Our men to-day.
So you must serve the cause you hit,
 Or change your bray.

Too oft 'mong those in high estate,
Some lawless mistress sets the gait,
And you and yours have felt her hate,
 In sounding knocks;
So throw at her your bobbing bait
 And crashing rocks.

And why the ballot for relief?
Stop crimes! your remedy is brief:
Just train your sons in your belief,
 And you shall win:
'Tis all you need a loyal chief
 To sound the din,

THE SUFFRAGETTE

And train your daughters, too, perforce,
To build for life a straighter course,
Than cabaret or grinning bourse,

Where maidens fall:

Just give her life a faith and force,—

And that is all.

IN THE GRAY

THE ORIENTAL BUBBLE

The Oriental Bubble, Sirs, was inflated by
yourself,
When press and pulpit opened up your shining
hoard of pelf,
To aid the cunning Nipponese to compel the
Northern Bear,
To lift his paw from the Orient and flee to his
frigid lair.

You hated your northern compeer,—a religious
hatred too,—
Because of his road to heaven and the broadness
of his view;
Now ope your gates to proud Japan, to Orient
welcome bid;
Bring hither the tongs of China and the gods
her idols hid;

Bring Seoul's curious customs, Manchuria's
hateful thrall.
The mandarins of Mongolia and then bow down
to Baal:

THE ORIENTAL BUBBLE

Then view your national ensign which once
flapped in Freedom's air,
And note of your stars of empire, Christianity
placed them there.

But while blazing high for commerce and court-
ing the Nipponese,
Obeying your kings of finance, exploring the
eastern seas;
You opened your gates unbidden, by shorten-
ing your neighbor's reach,
To the tribes of the unredeemed, who refuse the
God you preach.

As Christianity exalted yourself and your kith
and kin,
Make no other rule for entry for coming women
and men;
Let them all accept the Savior, His promise to
all mankind,
And then we shall all be brothers and a closer
friendship find.

IN THE GRAY

SOME SEEDS

Europe is crazy; her merciless kings
To brutal ambition tenaciously clings;
Her red seal of empire, like snow on the mould,
Waxes or wanes where her juggernaut rolled;
And blindly she sings from the ignorant past,

"The divine right of kings, O long may it last!"
O hasn't some mother who weeps for her son,
A spark of that love which through brotherhood
run,

O sing it from housetops against the wild views,
Which clutter the trenches and enjoy the news.
To the child or the student mention no name,
That murder has written on war's roll of fame.

'Tis worship of heroes from carnage's glare,
That makes peaceful people for war to prepare;
To spread forth their armies, great navies to
build,

And gloat in the glory of enemies killed.

O mothers! if peace among men you would share
Of prejudice, zealots, and ranters beware!

SOME SEEDS

For they sow the seeds which must blossom in
hate,

And poison the minds of the youth of the state;
More bitter it grows through the fast flying
years,

Till dimples and smiles are all smothered in
tears;

And through the red cordon of some mother's
sons,

Shall belch the destroyer's most pitiless guns!

No matter what worm you assail in its track,
For self preservation 'twill surely strike back;
And yours my dear people, is ever the fault,
Who recklessly offer your feeble assault;

Your subtile intrusion is checked by defeat,
And death and disaster survey your retreat;
For e'en though ambition should victory chose,
The Judge of the nations decides who shall lose.

So brothers your life work is merely a game,
Should be played by yourself on Love's field of
fame;

So play it like brothers both honest and fair,
And grant the pugnacious one more than his
share;

IN THE GRAY

His years like your own shall as ruthlessly fly,
Till he stands on the threshold of Death with a
sigh,

And ponders his guilt, the commands of his
God

He refused to obey while wielding the rod
Of haughty ambition: but now for a breath
He begs to atone before stricken by Death.

The request is not granted; the change came
too late,

And alone he must meet with the Judge of his
fate.

So play the game fairly whatever it be,
For the goal of the righteous is eternity.
And always remember when tempted to sin,
"Cursed is he who spreads discord among men!"

THERESA'S COMPLAINT

Beneath the blue Venetian skies,
In moated castle, proud and free,
I first beheld with infant eyes
The stores of joy life held for me.
With wealth and fame my titled sire
Could half the world with praise inspire:
Like earth and sky in dew drop shown,
His mercy had in mankind grown,
Until his name from shore to shore,
Reechoed praise from every door.
His menials on his wishes hung,
And armies strong at his command,
To his desires determined clung
To shape his wish throughout the land.

II

But ere my infancy was past—
Ere youth upon me could bestow
The strength, the wisdom, and the caste
Of gilded virtue's frozen glow,

IN THE GRAY

My mother gently passed away
Like sunset on a cloudless day,
And left me in a matrons care,—
The helpless image of despair,—
The plaything of vicissitude,
Of circumstance the favored pet,
Whose every cry and childish mood
Put maid and matron in a fret.

III

Immured within a convent wall,
And hid from eager eyes pursuit,
I grew in stature hale and tall,
With burning passion still and mute,
Whose wish or hope or vain desire
Was kindling fuel for future's fire;
Whose life was like a sapless leaf,
In beauty's tints when Fall was brief;
Whose every thought proscribed was wrong,
And every word essayed was praise;
Whose budding love was spent in song,
Proclaiming trust beyond the gaze.

THERESA'S COMPLAINT

IV

The passing years sent new desires,
As changeful life with moods is fraught,
And passion starts consuming fires
Beneath each sacred, silent thought.
Each hope with phantom joys was set
But bore the blossoms of regret;
Each yearning thought in love was framed
But sank in sullen passion tamed;
Each hymn in holy service sung,
Was like the lighter music flung;
And life was on the stormy wave
Where thoughtless chance assumed control,
Nor little recked beyond the grave
The welfare of the human soul.

V

Within La Mira's solemn cell,
And in the campus' dull recess,
I fain observed the chapel bell
Whose pensive summons to impress
The wayward soul with holy fire
To check the demon of desire?

IN THE GRAY

With love and pride my life was full,
With song and prayer my soul was dull;
The hopes and joys that rose for me,
Were drowned in this extremity.
Like hope the morning star of fate,
From thought forbade by act of state,
My life was empty as the cave
Where vibrant echoes wake and wave;
And lonely as the heart bereft
When night and gloom the sights transform,
And sad as lone survivor left
By sea and death within the storm.

VI

One afternoon I found a book,
It was "The Prisoner of Chillon."
I read the tragic lines that shook
The blooms of love and hope from one,
Confined within a dungeon dark,
For heeding heaven's celestial spark.
The author's name, an English lord,
From Virtue's eyes was banned and barred,
As one who sought in selfish ease,
The baser passion's life to please.

THERESA'S COMPLAINT

So like a pestilence his name
Was scourged beneath majestic fame.
Between the lines I wrote a prayer,
And placed it in the Virgin's bower,
Imploring heaven's potential care
For him who gave mankind such flower.

VII

As carelessly one day I strolled
Beneath the bower in silent thought,
A man presumptuous and bold,
Beheld the prayer my zeal hath wrought.
His eyes were full cerulean blue;
His face wore pale Carrara's hue;
His hair curled brown o'er lofty brow;
His form Appollo's might endow,
Save when he walked a crippled limb
Betrayed deformity in him.
He spoke with ease my native tongue,
Though on his lips an accent hung,
Common to Saxon scholars where
A foreign speech they must prepare.
I told how earnestly I prayed
For England's famous poet, strayed

IN THE GRAY

Beyond the pale of social caste,
Beneath the laws by heaven decreed;
I begged for pardon for his past
And power to guide his future need.

VIII

Again we met at St. Lazarre
Where conscience smitten pilgrims stroll,
To free the mind from waxing war,
Waged ruthlessly against the soul;
We talked of flowers and herbs and trees,
Of zephir mild and stirring breeze,
Of field and brook and balmy clime,
And man, the monitor of time;
Of bard, philosopher, and sage,—
Each shifting like the framing age,—
Of Dante, Tasso, and the few,
Whose songs though old are ever new.
His presence filled my life with pride,
My soul with youthful joy replete;
The social life my lot denied,
With him was happy and complete.

THERESA'S COMPLAINT

IX

His name a passing pilgrim sung,
That worshippers might feast their eyes:—
The English bard whose name was flung
To vulgar peasants to despise,
With me beneath the lime tree's shade,
Was viewed by those who scoffed and prayed,
And grouped around like children where
They hear a sudden trumpet's blare.
When thus exposed he feared for me,
And rose to part lest guilty glee
On vulgar tongues should link our names,
And make my future share his shames.
But love fears not the ribald jeer,
Nor justice seeks from saint or sage;
Imploring him forego his fear,
I bade him idle dread assuage.

X

Aglow with joy my sire one day,
To me a precious message brought,—
For I alone could make him gay,
And shape the channels of his thought.

IN THE GRAY

He lived for me, for me would die;
My hopes were mirrored in his eye.
So when I saw his smiling face,
My mind good news began to trace.
A lover true for me he found,
The richest lord on Roman ground;
Our troth was plighted, drunk in wine,
And pledged his heart and soul to mine.
Right joyfully the news I heard,
But maiden-like restrained my glee,
For when hath cupid passion stirred
Without suffusing modesty?

XI

I pictured in my lawless pride,
The lover true my sire portrayed,—
A royal youth both true and tried,
Apollo's form in martial braid.
With Venus passion in my breast,
His name my silent hours caressed;
With love and hope my buoyant soul,
Through lawless life did safely stroll,
Caressing Hope's expanding charms
Within a lover's trusty arms;

THERESA'S COMPLAINT

Embracing where the fever fled,
The future's joys before me spread;
Ravenna's castle—fount of fame—
The fairy groves of oak and pine,
And equipage to match the name
That joined the wealthy lord's to mine.

XII

At length arrived the wedding day,
The gifts of friends were in my bower:
The King's felicitations gay,
And noble greetings swelled my dower.
The chapel door was open flung,
While curious matrons idly hung
Around the scene to catch a glance
Of the procession's first advance.
The bride and groom were to their eyes
Like angels winged from paradise;
They watched and craned and thronged the
door,
To turn their eyes and peer once more.
It justly pleased my youthful pride
To be thus envied as a bride,
By even those, the village throng—

IN THE GRAY

The rugged servants and the dames
Of fasion, frolic, feast, and song,
Whose love had long been scorched by flames.

XIII

The chapel door, our trysting place,
I watched while maids bedecked my brow,
My lover's graceful form and face
To view ere introduction's bow
Presented to each other's eyes
The nuptial lot without disguise;
In vain I watched,—no graceful mien,
No stranger trod the chapel green.
The mirrored pictures of the mind,
To fill my cup with joy inclined,
As fancy breeds Perfection's claim
In princely throng or humble name.
So high in heavenly hopes I gleamed
With buoyant pictures of my joy;
Nor little thought nor seldom dreamed
That light and shade are life's alloy.

XIV

Ere long a troop of soldiers came,
The royal equipage to guide;

THERESA'S COMPLAINT

Their uniforms conveyed the name
That filled my heart and soul with pride,—
My lover's name—the royal lord,
Whose wedding day could well afford
To rival kings in grand display,
Since he more wealthy e'en than they,
Could summon ships from every sea,
To fill his purse or gloat his glee.
Like Midas seemed his golden touch,
His wealth, his power, his fame as much.
Not all the ancients in their pride,
A coach could gild wherein to ride,
Like his that fateful wedding morn;
Nor could their wealth such steeds adorn,
Where gilt and gold and silver run,
Out shone the brilliant midday sun!
"Le Conte! Le Conte!" arose the cry
From meddling thousands standing by;
The men cried out and waved their arms,
The women smiled to show their charms.
I could not see his form alight,
The throng and guard obscured my sight.
My father and my brother came
Like busts of bronze in golden flame,
So brightly dressed, so proudly gay,
That dross of earth beneath them lay,

IN THE GRAY

To call me to the altar where
The throng's applause would welcome be
While grudging eyes and hateful glare
Would view the conquest made by me.

XV

But when I to the altar came,
My eyes bewildered sought my lord;
A handsome youth awoke the flame,
I felt for England's royal bard;
I fixed him in mine eye the one
That all my future rested on;
So handsome, fair, so tall and straight,
That love and hope and trusting fate,
Through shine and shower such mercy drives
As heaven spared to link our lives.
I viewed the medals on his breast,
With hope to read the royal crest
That wealth to every land displayed,
And royal power to kings conveyed.
At length I caught the sign he bore,—
My lover's servant, nothing more.
I passed among the motley crowd,
Like one who acts a peaceful dream,
To find the youth my sire avowed
Was all that human form could seem.

THERESA'S COMPLAINT

XVI

Dreamlike my whirling senses swam
Above the crowd that smiled and jeered;—
As such confusion serves to dam
The channels where the thought is reared.
Like wreckage on a rapid stream,
I drifted through my conscious dream;
And every thought in me allied,
Refused to rise as if defied.
So in this much bewildered state,
I passed to pledge my life, my all,
To drink the bitter dregs of fate,—
The wormwood and the pungent gall.

XVII

Balanced against the altar's rail,
Supported by a sturdy cape,—
A broken wreck both worn and frail,—
As ancient as the antique fane
Wherein we stood, my lord appeared,
With aged eyes inflamed and bleared.
My sire loomed up a youth in age,
Beside this rich eccentric sage.
His face was colored like his gold,
With wrinkles hanging fold on fold;

IN THE GRAY

His hair! well, what was left was white;
His glossy pate reflected light
Like sunshine on a burnished brake,
Or on the desert's phantom lake;
His nose was aqualine and thin,
And reached his bare protruding chin,
Much like an icefloe in the sun,
As cold and damp its currants run;
His limbs were shriviled warped and bowed
From age's fast increasing load:
In truth his years, his form, his mien,
Repulsive were to youthful pride;
Apart he seemed in springtime's green,—
The withered stalk that winter dried.

XVIII

The wild bird caged can beat her breast
Against her sullen prison bars,
Until her plumage and her crest
Are ruffled like the field of wars.
'Tis wild—the freedom of the bird,—
And wild her voice is ever heard;
But wilder still the human throng
That robs the woodland of her song;

THERESA'S COMPLAINT

And than the savage beast more wild,
The wretch that robs of hope his child,
That leads her through her childish years,
So filled with power and pomp and pride,
To stormy days of grief and tears
Where all her youthful fancies died.

XIX

The marriage rites were sung and said,
I answered like a stricken slave,
Pledging my heart, my will, my bed,
To this deceiver of the grave.
But when I from the altar turned,
Like Heclka's fire my temper burned
With flames of wrath my faithless sire
Who built for me this dreadful pyre;
Like cormorants on carrion gorged,
The friends who saw my shackles forged;
Like reptiles in the fledgelings bed,
The few who vouched me lucky wed.
Where'er I turned my burning eye,
The hosts of hell were standing by:
The village belles in silence jeered
The wretched groom so worn and wierd;

IN THE GRAY

The servant maids in pity gazed,
Nor envied me the tome that praised;
The village youths who knelt to me,
Beheld my conscious misery,
And like the bat to sunlight blind,
Stood open eyed though closed in mind:
The floor reechoed from my tread,
As if the tombs their waiting dead
Had raised to view a sadder scene
Than Judgment day to them had been;
The firmament obscured her face
In cloud and mist, nor left a trace
Of early morning's gorgeous blue,
To lift my soul from out the slough
Of childish grief's illumined tears,—
The augury of coming years.
But tears, alas! cannot assuage,
Cannot the bitter part condone;
They dim alike the joyless page,
The one to which all joys have flown.

XX

But such a burlesque as the groom,
And such a travesty on man!

HERESA'S COMPLAINT

He passed the three score ten that doom
Had fashioned in creation's plan,
Affected in his graceless ways
The blitheness of his early days.
His boorish laughter seemed to quell
Merriment like a broken bell,
Pealing in solemn, sad refrain
Its requiem of toil and pain;
His doubtful step affected fast,
Trundled down like a thunder blast;
His back as crooked as a bow,
As rugged as the barren peaks
Of Appennines betrayed the slow
Despoiler and his grotesque freaks.

XXI

Ravenna's castle ope'd to me,
A prison girt with iron bars,
As lonely as the solemn sea,
As lifeless as the distant stars,
Where gawky matrons old and gray,
Pursued my footsteps night and day,
Nor left a single moment free
The soul still filled with youthful glee.

IN THE GRAY

Ravenna's oaks festooned with age,
Moaned sadly round my prison cage;
The hunting park where deer were bred,
Where sportsmen on their suffering fed,
To me was open for retreat,
When life was filled with loneliness;—
Though fenced with iron bars complete;
The thoughtless deer shared my distress.

XXII

But from my husbands jealous eye,
And from the sluths his craft employed,
My life was like a labored sigh,
Bereft of all that peace enjoyed.
His flesh as gelid as the snake,
As viscid as the frozen lake,
Repelled my touch, and in my bed
As welcome as the slimy dead;
As lifeless too, and passionless
As hope abandoned to distress.
His highest aim appeared to be
To find new ways to torture me:
He scoffed at every youthful aim,
And promptly quenched each comfort's flame;

THERES' A COMPLAINT

The servant maid who sought to please,
Was coached by hags to flout and tease;
The servants of our wedding day,—
The castle guards,—were sent away,
Banished to please his selfish eye,
His jealous fear to satisfy;
Till in the castle halls and ground,
Beside himself, no man was found.
A private chapel built for prayer,
Where I retired from sullen care,
Was hounded by his fiendish hags,
As cruel and stormy as the crags
Of Matterhorn upon whose breast
The coldest snows forever rest;
Where'er I went my grief to span,
Their fiendish eyes perceived a man,
Despite the fact that sun and stars
Were all that crossed my prison bars.
Their cruel lies provoked my lord
Who them believed instead of me;
He thenceforth strengthened fence and guard
To rob me of all liberty.

IN THE GRAY

XXIII

The lonesome minutes dragged like hours,
And hours were lengthened into days,
Where joy despairs and true love sours
In Hate's perplexing tangled maze:
The weeks, the months, the years that passed,
Seemed more to me than time could last;
And every passing moments trace
Was deeply graven in my face:
My hair a glossy black when wed,
Its crown of silver naively spread.
Though cruel to me relentless time,
My shriveled lord spread o'er with grime
That stript his tott'ring step of power
And left him helpless in my bower.
Yet on he lived, he would not die,
Nor from my side a moment hie.
He loved me not, for each decree
His hags conceived to punish me,
Was there enforced as rigidly
As heaven enforces gravity.
So like the bird within its cage,
I drooped and withered day by day;
My only joy the written page,
My only hope to wait and pray.

Theresa's Complaint

XXIV

My life's last hope, my brother dear,
Was banished from Ravenna's cell;
His visits brought my life some cheer,
And made it less a living hell.
But on my face a smile was deemed
The traces where corruption streamed.
As sunbeams through a cranny show
The squalid airs infectious flow,
So I was judged by hags and lord,
Worst of my sex! yet youth was spent
Where grief passed down its robe of gray;
And Envy's senile mind was lent
To chase all dawning joys away!

XXV

But like the wren in prison bound,
That shrinks from Love's caressing hand;
When racked by thoughtless hurt and wound,
It turns and fights in life's last stand.
So I my mental sorrow bore
Till mind and heart could stand no more;
So like a demon gaining power,
My bonds I broke in one short hour;

IN THE GRAY

My lord I flayed with club and thong,
And ordered forth his servile throng;
I boxed his ears and slapped his face,
His hags I banished in disgrace.
No more to me Ravenna's pride
Was ought but comfort justified!
Such servants came at my command,
As ne'er before obeyed my hand:
My wish, my will, my least desire,
Set every household heart on fire.
His castle gate in fight secure,
I opened for the village poor,
And welcomed them in person where
My life had learned to know despair;
His coffers filled with hoarded gold,
I emptied o'er each famished fold.
My life should henceforth never know
The joyless years that tyrants rule;
I learned that Mind can overthrow
The fearful despot and his school.

XXVI

But as the fox when captured feigns
The sickly trait of docile mind,
Ere long my lord my tightened reins
Led captive like the beggar blind.

THERESA'S COMPLAINT

But like the fox his silent thought
Planned coups to bring my power to nought,
His ancient castle to restore
To him and his forevermore.
So at the court he found a law,
As old as Adam and as raw,
That branded me a brawling shrew,
And sent me forth to live apart,
Where'er my roving fancy flew,
For solace for my broken heart.

XXVII

Alone I lived or cloistered where
The few all life's *eclat* abjured,
And comfort sought in song and prayer,
With homeless orphans just immured;
Or when my soul exalted rose
Triumphant o'er my pressing woes,
I found in cities famed and far,
The trappings of my parent star:
The pleasures heaven's children share,
The total absence of despair,
The joys of hope in peace allied,
That God to man hath ne'er denied.

IN THE GRAY

I trod the Grecian fields of strife,
And dying soldiers nursed to life;
I saw the lights of freedom turn,
And trimmed their wicks to make them burn;
Again I met the English bard,
As lifeless as the autumn sward,
In battle's van, proclaiming free
The land he saw as poets see.
I watched him sinking day by day,
Housed by thunder cloud and skies,
Till like a child he passed away
From his despondent memories.

XXVIII

As frost congeals the rippling stream,
And steals the laughter from the brook,
So rigid life deforms the dream,
In childish musings fancy took,
And made my life a ruffled page,
With youthful hopes denied by age.
I followed far the sacred road,
And none would aid me with my load;
I wore Ravenna's thorny crown,
And bled when Cruelty pressed it down;

THERESA'S COMPLAINT

Through wedded life my cross I bore,
As few who lived had done before;
I erred perchance when sorrow pressed,—
But trust the Future to be blest.
I cursed the hour that gave me birth,
The ties that bound my soul to earth;
My sire I cursed who me betrayed,
To wed the miser Fortune made.
But let the future deal with me,
And not mankind's ignoble rod:
'Tis true, I'm cursed by man's decree,
My future rests alone with God.

IN THE GRAY

A FAIRY

Within the church while silence reigned,
And all were wrapt in holy prayer;
Across the long drawn aisle I strained
To steal a glance at maiden fair;—
Of form and face, of gait and dress,
The sweetest angel heaven could bless.

Each Sabbath found me in the pew,
Like Paul near fair Virginia's bower,
Where best this angel I might view,
And sate my joy with such a flower,
Where Love her soul to mine might turn,
And all its blessed raptures burn.

But time sped on, O tyrant Time!
When I to her my love made known,
And heard her lips in words sublime,
Reveal a wish to me unknown,
Her words sincere her soul revealed,
Betraying traits that sight concealed.

A FAIRY

The cadence of her mellow voice
Flowed freely as a gentle rill,
Entrancing me that such a chioce,
From heaven's care my life should fill,
Then illness mixed with mad alarms,
Stole from her face and form their charms.

Her temper too was rudely changed,
Would hotly soar like rising steam;
Her mellow voice in accents ranged
From vixen's threat to fashion's dream.
So all that Beauty gave was lost
Where passion wreaked and temper tossed.

Thus fares the beauty of the hour,
Oft changed at will by fickle fate;
The passions which display our power
Oft rise in love and sink in hate:
For what we crave when once supplied,
Has lost the charm that love defied.

IN THE GRAY

A SUPPLICANT

A week ago a millionaire
Of wondrous power and wondrous care,
Answered the angels trumpet blare,
To cross the Styx;
Nor took he from his wealth his fare,
Sharon to fix.

I auger not his present state,
Since he has passed from Will to Fate,
Where meekly lie the worldly great,
The humblest clod,
Among the wrecks of fear and hate,
Awaiting God.

Great God! thy mercy sure I share;
Have pity on the millionaire;
His good deeds I can't name in prayer;
I know them not,
And thou alone canst him prepare
A happy lot.

A MULTIMILLIONAIRE'S DEATH

Though worth a hundred million,
Thou art consigned to rot;
No noble deed survives thee,
'Tis soon thou'lt be forgot.

The pauper mid his poverty,
Before thee oft did stand,
Beseeching thee, imploring thee
To heed his outstretched hand.

The lawless little "Newsie",
Brought papers to thy door,
Then sought his naked cabin
As wretched as before.

The widow begged thy mercy
For herself and orphan child;
Thou heeded not but banished her
Into the storms wild.

IN THE GRAY

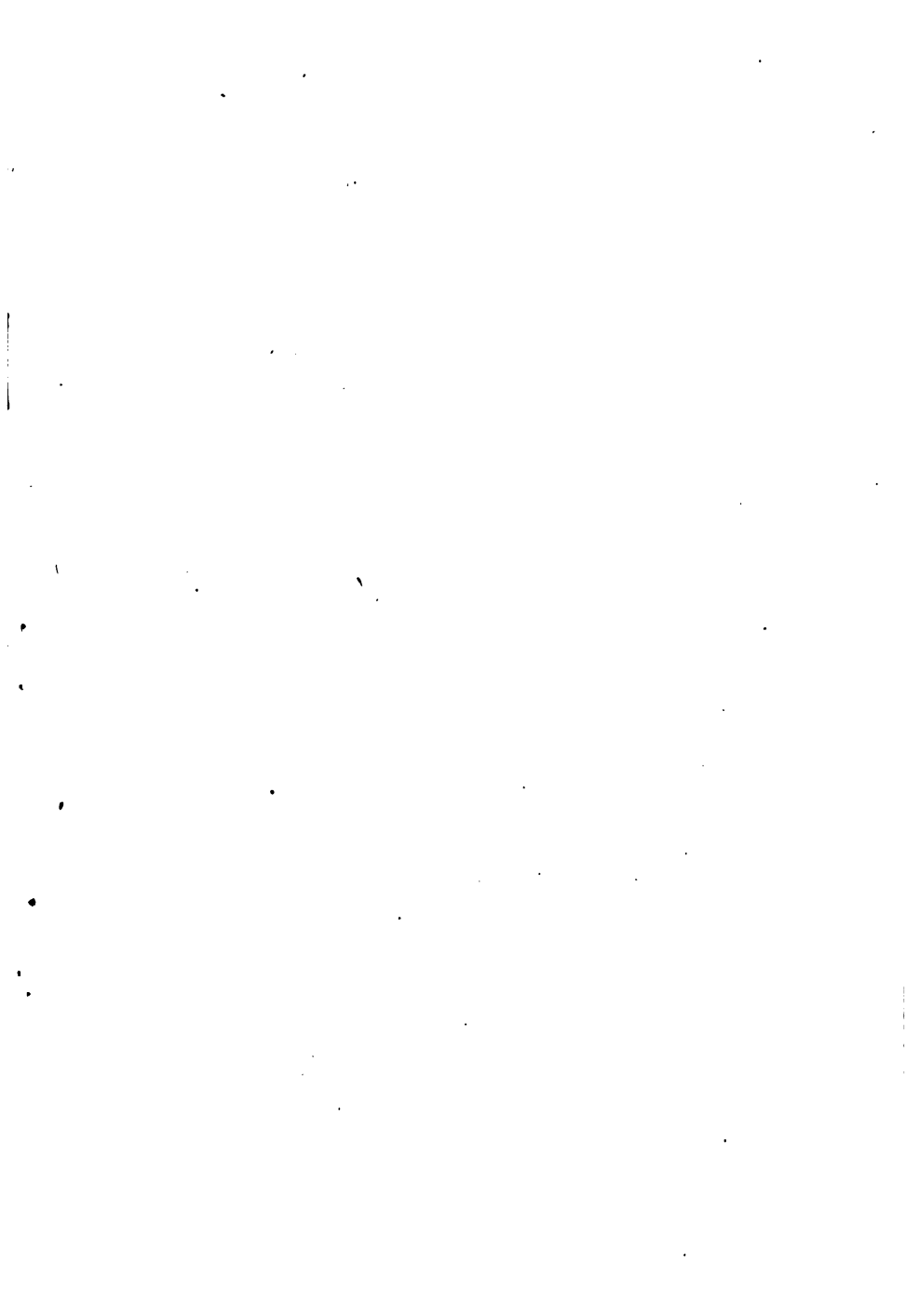
The jailbird, too, besought thee
For life another chance;
Thou didst not heed his entreaty,
Nor help him to advance.

The orphan in his loneliness,
Toiled for thee long in vain:
Thou didst not succor him in grief,
Nor comfort him in pain.

These were thy heavenly chances,
To prepare for thee a store,
To last throughout eternity,
When lust and life are o'er.

These were the heavenly chances,
The Lord cast in thy way,
To lift to Him thy famished soul,
And teach thee to obey.

Thy fellow thee cannot forgive,
Thy suppliant soul to save:
And God's mercy must all exceed
To grant what now thou crave.



**This book is under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building**

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